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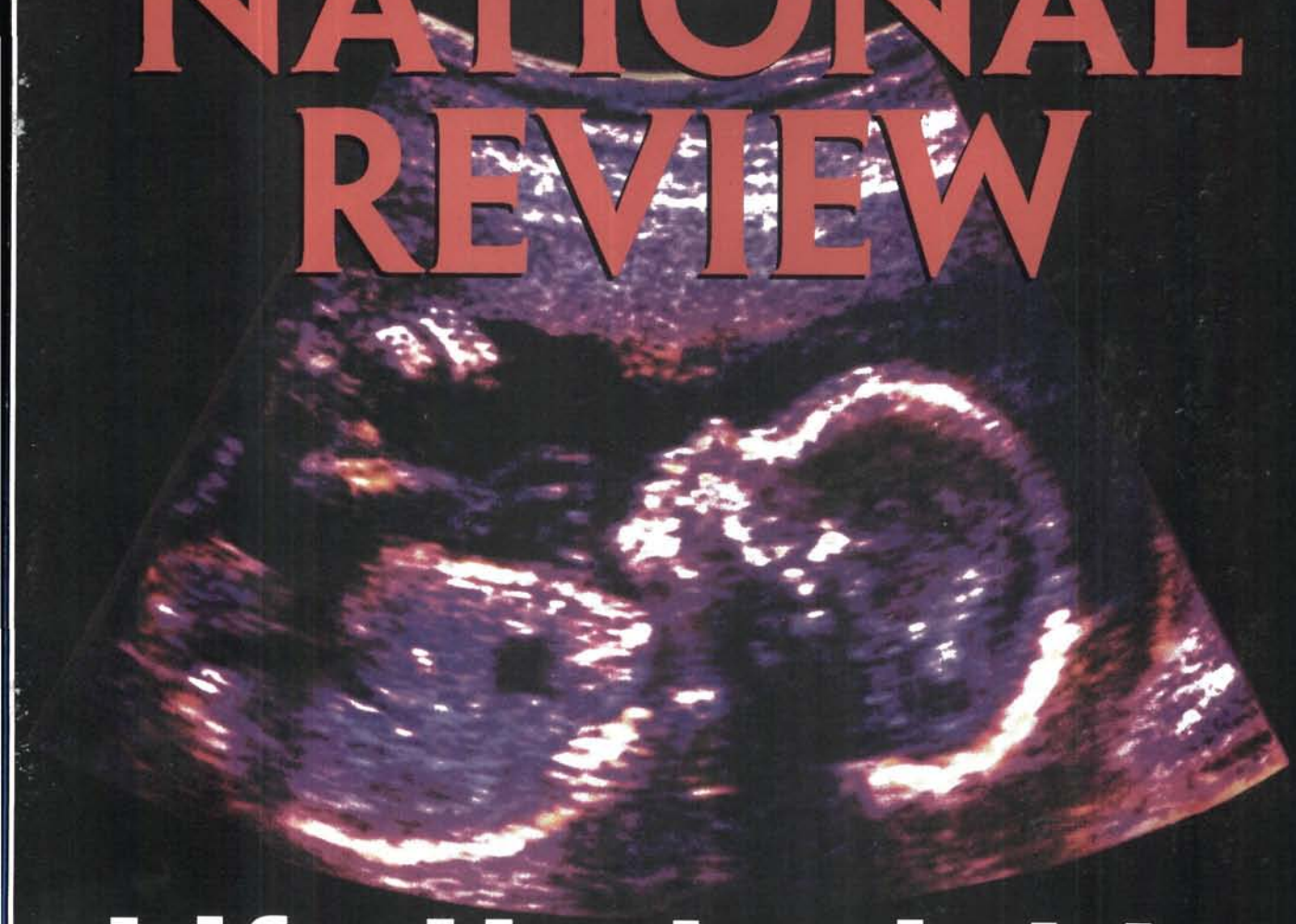
OKS ISSUE

Rob Long on *Les* Rioting *Français*

NATIONAL REVIEW



Life Undeniable

Why Democrats are Losing the Abortion Wars *by Ramesh Ponnuru*

PLUS: *Pryce-Jones* on Ahmadinejad, *Miller* on Brownback, and *McCarthy* on the *New York Times*

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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■ COVER STORY

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Winning, and Losing, on Abortion

Democrats concluded that guns lost them the 2000 election. They also lost their huge advantage on education between 1999 and 2002, when George W. Bush changed the topic of debate. Now it is becoming increasingly difficult for Democrats to deny that their support for "abortion rights" is hurting them, not helping them. *By Ramesh Ponnuru*

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NATIONAL REVIEW (ISSN: 0028-0038) is published bi-weekly, except for the first issue in January, by NATIONAL REVIEW, Inc., at 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y., and additional mailing offices. ©National Review, Inc., 2006. Address all editorial mail, manuscripts, letters to the editor, etc., to Editorial Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016. Address all subscription mail orders, changes of address, undeliverable copies, etc., to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668; phone, 815-734-1232, Monday–Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. Eastern time. Adjustment requests should be accompanied by a current mailing label or facsimile. Direct classified advertising inquiries to: Classifieds Dept., NATIONAL REVIEW, 215 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016 or call 212-679-7330. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NATIONAL REVIEW, Circulation Dept., P. O. Box 668, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054-0668. Printed in the U.S.A.

RATES: $59.00 a year (24 issues). Add $21.50 for Canada and other foreign subscriptions, per year. (All payments in U.S. currency.) The editors cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork unless return postage or, better, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. Opinions expressed in signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the editors.

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May 8 issue; printed April 20

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MAIN NUMBER 212-679-7330
SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES 815-734-1232
WASHINGTON OFFICE 202-543-9226

ADVERTISING SALES 212-679-7330
Executive Publisher Scott F. Budd
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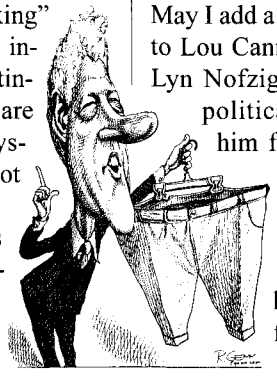
letters to the editor

PATCHWORK SOLUTIONS

Florence King's "The Great Uninsured" (April 24) provides a clever and fresh analysis of the cultural implications of health insurance in this country since its inception. While I find her catalogue of past mistakes highly instructive, I would hope for a future superior to her prognosis that the American people will only resort to attempts at "fixing" and patching up a worn-out, inadequate system—and that tinkering is bound to fail. We are indeed trying to "fix" the system, but half-measures are not always bad.



Miss King deftly points us in the right direction by noting that good ideas often become bad ones under the weight of misguided but inevitable modifications. Ultimate success, however, will require accepting *some* incremental moves. We are beginning to see them all around us. The 2003 introduction of Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) is a good example of an imperfect solution that is nonetheless a step in the right direction; their growing popularity highlights the positive effects small changes can have. To be sure, remnants of the old dirigiste system remain, but incentives built into the HSA system (similar to the ones guiding Individual Retirement Accounts) spur individual investment and household savings, and provide an end-run around the federal tax code—a solution that should make all conservatives cheer. And so too should libertarian-leaning advocates: If you want to have elective surgery, fine, just save your money in advance.

Just recently, Wal-Mart offered to use its cost-cutting expertise to help policymakers determine what factors drive up healthcare costs and how to wring inefficiencies out of the U.S. healthcare system. Of course, this announcement is partly a PR gesture, but the main point is that one should never underestimate the power of American ingenuity in the face of complex problems. After all, our political system, while created by revolutionaries, is ultimately designed for minor tinkering over an extended period of time. By allowing big ideas to be our guide, steadfast and consistent tinkering can achieve great results.

T. Henry Camp
Handy Crossroads, Ga.

THERE ONCE WAS . . .

May I add a little-known but telling fact to Lou Cannon's touching obituary of Lyn Nofziger (April 24)? Lyn wrote political limericks. I never met him face to face, but two years ago when he learned I was editing a book called *Liberating the Limerick* he sent me 150 of his unpublished verses, saying I was free to use any of them—and he added that credit was unnecessary. Here is one of the four I selected:

A Boston Cardinal named Law
Had an unforgivable flaw.
He greeted pedophiles
With winks and with smiles,
Instead of a sock on the jaw.

May his humor endure.

Ernest W. Lefever
Chevy Chase, Md.

A SALAD BAR?

Dave Shiflett's article on Bill Clinton's war on obesity ("Chief of the Fat Police," March 27) made me laugh. I think I remember that Clinton called McDonald's the "greatest invention" of the 20th century. I wonder if he has a prescient pick for the 21st.

Diane Lommel
Anchorage, Alaska

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ENERGY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

COAL

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THE WEEK

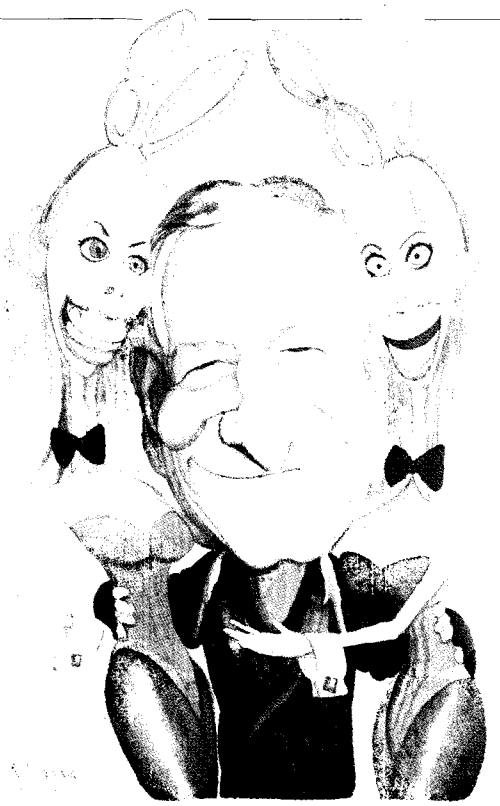
■ A new study casts doubt on the power of prayer. Bad news for congressional Republicans.

■ The *New York Times* won the Pulitzer prize for exposing President Bush's efforts to identify al-Qaeda terrorists before they kill us. Of course it did.

■ Gov. Mitt Romney signed a plan to achieve universal health coverage in Massachusetts. He is getting rave reviews in the national press, but the plan really isn't that bad. It is heavier on regulation than we would like. It mandates that everyone purchase health insurance. A better approach would be to deregulate insurance so that cheap, no-frills policies were available. That way, more people would find insurance attractive and buy it voluntarily. On the other hand, the insurance "connector" in the plan is genuinely innovative. The federal tax code encourages employers to provide health insurance rather than just giving people higher wages with which to buy their own insurance. The connector is a way of working around that problem. Employers would give workers a set amount of money, and they could use the connector to buy insurance from one of several participating companies—and the federal tax break would still apply. The Massachusetts plan is not our idea of a model for the country. But given how Democratic the state legislature is, it could have been much worse.

■ Roy Warden was charged with reckless burning after he torched a Mexican flag at a counter-protest to a pro-illegal-immigration rally in Tucson. Warden's action drew a disapproving comment from Lourdes Aranda, Mexico's assistant foreign minister. "We consider any act of provocation or vandalism against national symbols to be unacceptable." Whoa, Sra. Minister. Pro-illegal rallies have blossomed with Mexican flags. When mainstream-media outlets, like the *Los Angeles Times*, report this fact at all (they prefer to focus on the American flags that demonstrators also carry), supporters of illegals ask why it is any different from Irish or Italian flags at St. Patrick's or Columbus Day parades. It wouldn't be different, if the Mexican flags were sentimental remembrances of a home the marchers had left behind, emotionally as well as physically. But if they are "national symbols," then perhaps flaunting them is not an encouraging prelude to amnesty.

■ Zacarias Moussaoui's contempt for America has no doubt been fortified by his trial. So many pains, to fry a slug. The elaborate sentencing phase, in which the jury must decide whether he will be executed, is a byproduct of our discomfort with capital punishment. Our legal avant-gardists have not quite enforced pacifism via the judicial branch, but the hoops through which the prosecution has jumped to extract the ultimate penalty show how much progress they have made. At every stage of the trial, Moussaoui has made a running commentary of sneer and smirk. The Sixth Amendment guarantees that a defendant be "confronted" with the witnesses against him. Does it allow him to do courtroom insult comedy? At least the Israelis stuck Eichmann in a glass booth.



ROMAN GENN

Hugh Hefner is observing his 80th birthday—and our Roman Genn celebrates.

■ In January, Rhode Island became the eleventh state to legalize medical marijuana, and its first resident to apply for a drug permit was a 43-year-old woman suffering from multiple sclerosis. She expects her application to be granted, but legal hurdles remain. Lawmakers in Washington, D.C., maintain their hard line in the drug war, refusing to give states discretion in the regulation of dope. Possession of marijuana is a federal crime. So if a chronically sick woman uses it to ease her suffering without harming anyone else, federal law demands her incarceration. Such absurdity offends both federalism and common sense.

■ Former President Clinton, in a speech to a black think tank in Washington, said something as striking as it was characteristic. "The idea that I live in a country I spent my lifetime trying to make better, but there's still hundreds of thousands, maybe millions of people, most of them people of color, who will die before their time, drop out of school, go to prison, never have a chance to live their dreams, is galling and painful to me." *I spent my life-*

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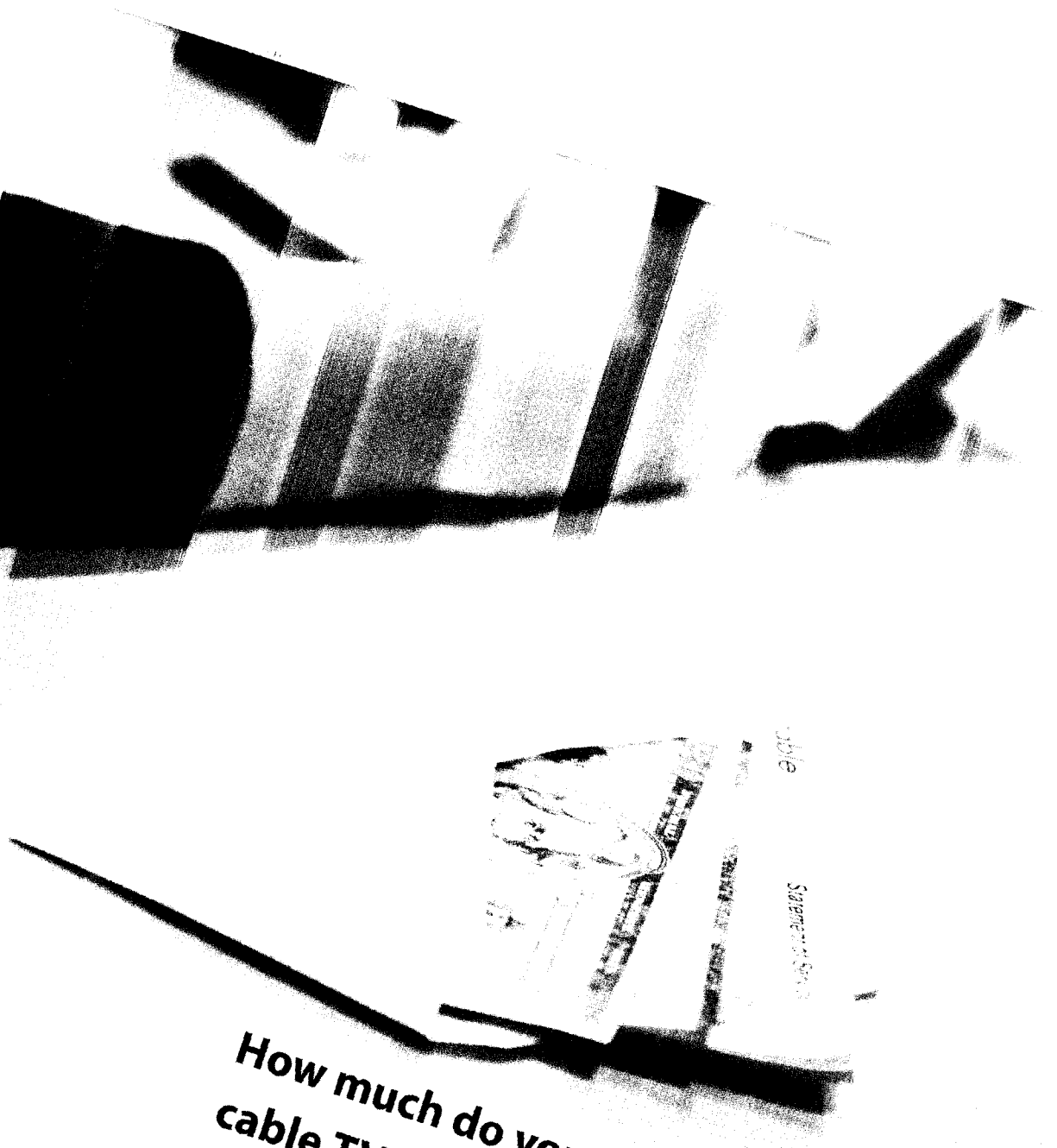

How much do you "tip" your cable TV company every month? The answer will shock you.

The vast majority of Americans don't have a real choice in television.[1] That's why they pay more.

How much more? A January report from Bank of America Equity Research says in places that allow competition, prices have dropped 28 to 42%.[2] Do the math — that's an extra $20 a month on a $60 cable bill. It's like having to tip the cable company for the privilege of not having a real choice.

Fortunately, that might change. Congress is considering a proposal to give people a new choice to traditional cable TV.

To make your voice heard, call 1-888-346-1400 or visit www.wewantchoice.com.

TV4US

1. Evidence shows that the presence of another wireline operator is critical to effective competition. The General Accounting Office found that DBS (satellite) competition causes only "a slight reduction" in cable prices while "competition from a second wire-based operator appears to significantly lower cable prices." GAO-04-8; Issues Related to Competition and Subscriber Rates in the Cable Television Industry, October 2003.
2. In areas where wireline competition has been introduced, the incumbent cable provider cut prices between 28-42%. "Battle for the Bundle: Consumer Wireline Services Pricing," Bank of America Equity Research, January 23, 2006.

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The Week . . .

time . . . galling and painful to me. The former president shows that he is more sensitive than Jesus (Matthew 26:11). You could swear, but blasphemy itself detumesces in this man's presence.

■ Katherine Harris will not be the next senator from Florida. She can win the Republican nomination, but she cannot defeat Democratic incumbent Bill Nelson. On paper, there is much to like about her candidacy. She won a statewide election for secretary of state in 1998, and she has prevailed in two races for Congress. But polls routinely show her trailing Nelson by more than 20 points, and most of her staff has quit in despair. In a year when the GOP majority in the Senate is in jeopardy, every seat is crucial, and the party can't afford to forfeit a chance to beat a vulnerable Democrat. Although it's late in the day—the filing deadline for candidates is May 12—there is still time for another Republican to enter the race. The best option may be Florida house speaker Allan Bense. Or perhaps businessman Tom Rooney, who recently passed on the race, can be convinced to reconsider. But neither of these men is likely to launch an underdog effort unless Harris first drops out. She should do so now, for the good of the party she has served so loyally.

■ The Italian elections have thrown up a virtual tie. Out of 38 million votes cast, something like 25,000 votes give the Socialist challenger Romano Prodi the lead over the incumbent conservative Silvio Berlusconi. It's those hanging chads all over again in an Italian context. Prodi claims that he has won, while Berlusconi alleges that there has been "so much fraud," demanding recounts and refusing to concede. The Italian president, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, has to give the eventual winner a mandate to form the government, but confusion grows because his term of office ends in mid-May. There is not likely to be a government for several weeks, and if Prodi forms one, then Berlusconi and his allies are promising to bring it down in even fewer weeks, as they very easily can. The economy has zero growth, debt is rising, the social costs of the state are unaffordable, experts are arguing that Italy can save itself from crisis only by taking the drastic step of leaving the euro, but the politicians are too busy fighting one another to address such matters.

AT&T, Too

I'd never protest if Aunt Minnie,
On the horn with Kubla Khan,
Gets bugged like crazy: Auntie could be
Plotting some infernal con.
But when the woman's chatting-up that
Dreary bag who lives next door,
Alberto R. Gonzales shouldn't
Plug in from the corner store.

—W. H. von Dreele

■ The demonstrators have drifted off the streets of Paris, taking home with them a famous victory. President Chirac and Dominique de Villepin, his prime minister and crony, passed a law aimed at remedying the country's chronic unemployment by loosening regulations that make hiring prohibitively expensive. The unions, and particularly the students about to come on the labor market, would have none of it, hastening instead to the barricades. This was violence enough to force the Chirac-Villepin combination into a surrender so abject that it paralyzes government. Instead of any reform of the labor laws, there are to be expanded training and incentive programs to add to the taxpayers' already unbearable burden and the government's already crippling role in the workplace. The Chirac presidency comes to an end next year, leaving a legacy that its successor will need a great deal of will and authority to clear up.

■ The U.S. has announced that it won't seek a seat on the new U.N. Human Rights Council. In the spirit of "he who lies down with dogs shall rise up with fleas," one might think this a good thing. After all, the whole point of reforming the old U.N. Human Rights Commission was to keep states like Libya, Cuba, and Sudan from gaining seats on it, but the new body is, if anything, more likely to be dominated by human-rights abusers. Yet the U.S. announcement hardly looks like a statement of principle. The administration also says that it might seek a seat next year and that, in the meantime, it will support the council diplomatically and financially. That gave those who like to bash Bush's diplomacy an opening to charge that the U.S. isn't running for a seat because it knows it can't win one. Regardless of whether that's true, the administration would have been better off walking away decisively and completely—and founding a new body devoted to protecting human rights outside the U.N. structure—than taking this half step.

■ Described by one news account as a "blonde student with a photogenic pout," 23-year-old Tamar Goregian was crowned Miss Iraq at a beauty pageant in Baghdad. The ecstatic young queen told a jubilant audience, "Maybe beauty is the final step to end the violence and preach peace after all." Or maybe not. Days after her victory, Goregian abruptly fled the country, terrified for her life after receiving numerous death threats from jihadist thugs who referred to her as the "queen of infidels." Her crown then went to a series of women all of whom stood down, until it was taken up by the pageant's fourth-place finisher, a young woman who has since gone into hiding. How fitting, as a reminder of the hideousness of Islamofascism, that it has driven beauty underground.

■ A trailer is supposed to give a foretaste of a movie. Therefore the trailer for *United 93*, about the flight whose passengers died struggling to wrest it from terrorists, shows a montage of events of 9/11. Some popcorn-munchers have objected, causing certain theaters to pull the trailer, including at least one in Manhattan, only a few miles from Ground Zero. We might better think about the lessons of war, as described by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. in his Memorial Day speech, "The Soldier's Faith." "War, when you are at it, is horrible and dull. It is only when time has passed that you see that its message was

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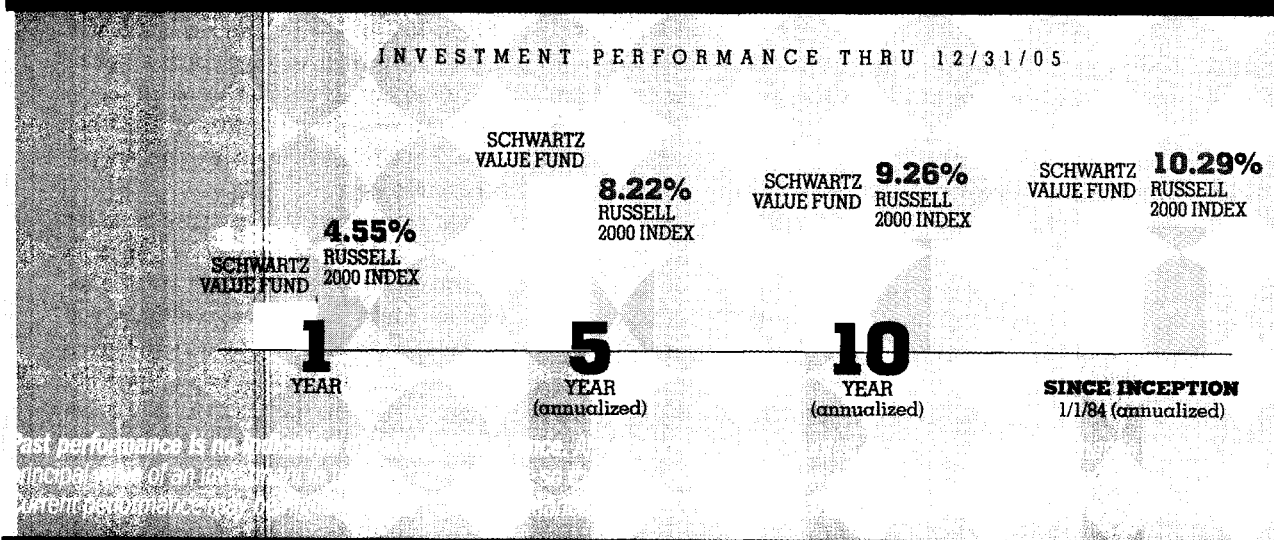
Performance speaks louder than words



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divine. . . . In this snug, over-safe corner of the world we need it, that we may realize that our comfortable routine is no eternal necessity of things, but merely a little space of calm in the midst of the tempestuous untamed streaming of the world, and in order that we may be ready for danger. . . . Out of heroism grows faith in the worth of heroism." If soldiers are heroic, so were the passengers on Flight 93, untrained, out of uniform, volunteering at a moment's notice. We have more such moments ahead of us; may we meet them as readily.

■ A woman hired to strip at an off-campus party for the Duke lacrosse team says that she was raped by three players, and the case chased even Barry Bonds off the TV news. The dancer was black, and all but one of Duke's lacrosse players were white, so there is a racial angle. The dancer is a 27-year-old unmarried mother of two; the lacrosse players are big men on a prestigious campus, so there is also a class angle. There is, finally, the question that the legal system is charged to answer—did a crime occur, and if so, who committed it? Two of the players have

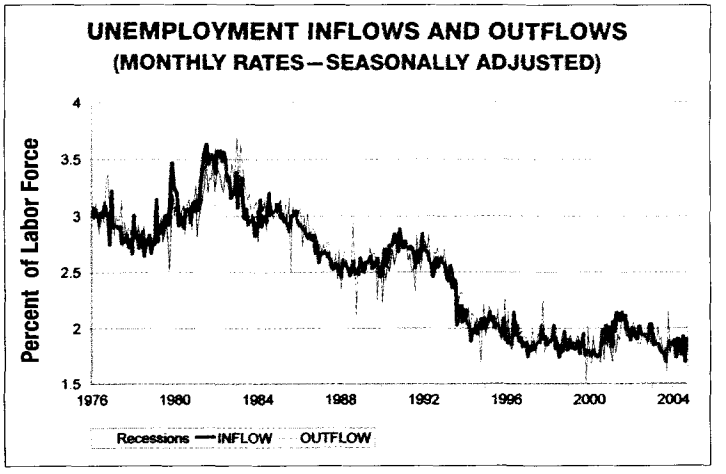
High Anxiety

We live in strange economic times. We are in the midst of a lengthy economic boom, unemployment is low, and GDP growth in the first quarter of this year was likely more than 5 percent. The latest Federal Reserve data suggest that factories are the busiest they have been in over five years.

But the polls tell us that Americans are anxious. Overall, people think things in the U.S. are going in the wrong direction. According to a recent poll, more people think the economy is doing very badly than very well, and a majority of respondents disapprove of President Bush's handling of the economy.

Why the anxiety? A widely held view is that globalization has led to a world of high turnover. In the past, the story goes, employers cared about their workers and gave them jobs for life. Today, job security is lower, and workers are nervous.

This "changing world" story was introduced into the public consciousness by President Clinton, but has been echoed by virtually everyone since. In his speech at the 2004 Republican convention, Bush said, "The times in which we live and work are changing dramatically. The worker of our parents' generation typically had one job, one skill, one career, often with one company that provided health care and a pension. . . . Today, workers change jobs, even careers many times during their lives."



SOURCE: DAVIS ET AL. (2006)

But are things really changing so much? The accompanying chart shows the percentage of the workforce that flows into and out of unemployment in a given month. Back in 1976, when Jimmy Carter was president, about 3 percent of the workforce entered unemployment in a typical month, and about the same percentage exited unemployment. After surging in the early 1980s, these numbers have declined steadily. Today, the flows into and out of unemployment in a typical month are less than half their rates of the early 1980s.

So job security has not dropped off the face of the earth. Indeed, it probably has improved, at least according to a thorough analysis of the data done recently by Steven J. Davis, R. Jason Faberman, and John Haltiwanger. Their paper shows that many indicators of volatility in the labor markets have trended down over time. While the level of turnover is still high relative to other countries, the amount of job churn is a sign of the dynamism and health of our economy. Outside of recessions, more jobs are usually created than destroyed. The labor market is a game of musical chairs where more chairs are put into the game when the music stops.

Labor-market turnover is something workers have faced for the past century. So why are we so anxious today? There is some evidence that earnings have become more volatile recently. Employers tend to reward workers for good times, and penalize them for bad times, more than they used to. But given the high level of prosperity in the U.S., a little extra earnings volatility shouldn't be too troubling.

I believe that our collective angst has less to do with economics and more to do with our national character. Back when the odds of being unemployed were much higher, we dealt better with the world's challenges because we were better equipped psychologically to do so. We were, as Harvard's Harvey Mansfield might put it, more "manly." "Manliness," he writes in his new book with that title, "seeks and welcomes drama and prefers times of war, conflict, and risk." A manly society would be ashamed to admit anxiety in the face of turnover. The culture we have today wallows in negative statistics that are still better than our predecessors could have imagined.

One can almost hear Dana Carvey's grumpy old man character on *Saturday Night Live* responding to today's media: "You call that job-market insecurity? In my day we had real insecurity. And we liked it!" It's not the times that are changing, it's the people.

But Americans are resilient, despite their occasional fits of pessimism. Judging by the low unemployment rate, people seem to be dusting themselves off and getting back to work. The anxious should take heart: The economy is humming along strongly right now, and everything will work out fine, just as it always has.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT

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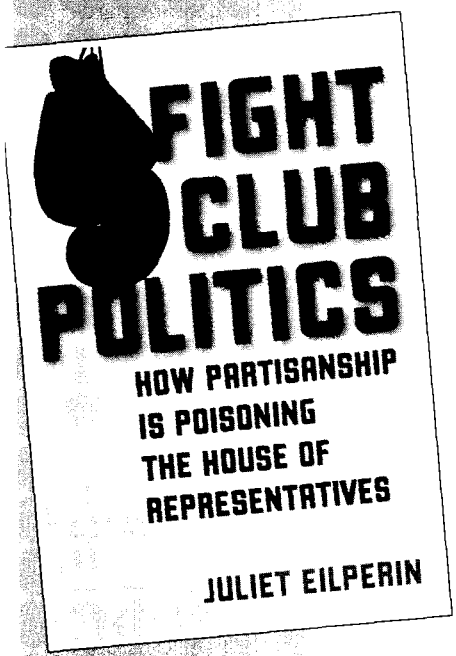

Fight Club Politics

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JULIET EILPERIN

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THE WEEK...

been charged, but we are still in what might be called the media discovery phase, where all information is produced by pre-trial jockeying. Before it leaves our screens, we should ask, Is it cool for lacrosse teams to hire strippers to entertain them, even if they are not raped? Boys will be boys, of course, but when do they start to become men?

■ Here is the saddest illegal-immigrant story of all. In one of those daunting yet pointless enterprises, an Englishman and an American, Karl Bushby and Dimitri Kieffer, took it into their heads to walk around the world, or as much of it as can be walked around. Starting from the southern tip of South America, they have spent the last seven and a half years walking up to Alaska, whence they crossed the frozen Bering Strait to Siberia, hoping to proceed thence to London. Here, however, things went wrong. The intrepid walkers did not have the right documentation for entering Russia. They were placed under house arrest in a Siberian village. At a court hearing, they were fined and ordered to be deported. As we go to press, an appeal is pending. Just a thought: Have Karl and Dimitri considered staging a march down the village street, chanting "¡Sí, se puede!" and flaunting a British or an American flag?

■ The Bible of the enlightened just grew longer—like the Constitution, it is a living document—with the addition of the "Gospel of Judas," a Coptic text from 300 A.D., telling a story that was perhaps 120 years older. Discovered in Egypt in the 1970s, it has only now been published. Jesus and Judas, it seems, were really tight, and Judas betrayed him only to fulfill the divine plan, which could not be revealed to the other eleven disciples. Like other Gnostic gospels—heretical texts condemned by the early Church—it posits an elite wisdom, for spiritual insiders. It is also rather badly written. (Adam Gopnik of *The New Yorker* noted that its Jesus has "one of those sardonic, significant, how-little-you-know laughs, like the laugh of the ruler of a dubious planet on *Star Trek*.") Hucksters and kooks have been trying to horn in on the Greatest Story Ever Told since it was first told. The buzz over the Gospel of Judas proves again G. K. Chesterton's insight: Once men believe in nothing, they will believe in anything.

■ Out in those great blank spaces beyond our shores, anti-Americanism is rampant, and we are being urged to help improve our nation's image. A group of U.S. corporations, working with the State Department, has produced an etiquette guide for Americans abroad. *Be modest and courteous. Express interest in local culture, sports, topics. Be a good listener. Stay off religion.* If anyone wants our opinion, this is sad stuff. We'll grudgingly admit that U.S. businesses need to be polite to their foreign customers. Still, it would be a loss to the color and variety of the world—to *diversity*—if the traditional American tourist figure were to disappear. He may be loud and assertive; he may wear garish shirts and ill-fitting slacks; he may not know rococo from baroque; he may pester waiters for such exotica as Caesar salad or hash browns. He is, though, with his curiosity, his generous prosperity, his love of comfort and efficiency, his plain piety, an advertisement for our way of life. Long may he endure. And who cares what the foreigners think?

■ The annual Easter Egg Roll on the White House lawn drew thousands of parents and children, as it has for 130 years now. This year, however, 200 or so of the parents were wearing artificial leis in rainbow colors. Why thus distinguish themselves? Well, these were homosexual couples, asserting their right to participate, together with the children they are raising, in this traditional family event. Could they not have participated just as well without the colorful leis? Ah, but then their presence might have gone unnoticed, their numbers unremarked. Were they not, then, shamelessly politicizing a formerly apolitical event designed not to promote anyone's "lifestyle," but to give harmless pleasure to innocents? Perish the thought! Who would be so cynically manipulative as to do such a thing?

■ Muriel Spark was an artist through and through. She saw the world as a rich and wonderful provider of stories. The human comedy captivated her. A Catholic, she knew about Good and Evil, and wasn't afraid to depict them; the Devil himself appears in one of her scintillating early novels, and the figure of Death in another. She took big risks in her writing, and her wit and originality always pulled them off. Most remarkable was her deftness, the light and almost throwaway touch that leaves unsaid as much as it says. In person she was trim, beautifully dressed, politely but attentively sizing everyone up for the story he had to tell. It was wholly in character that every time she published another bestseller she proudly presented herself with an expensive piece of jewelry. For a number of years she lived in New York, where *The New Yorker* gave her an office, and devoted an issue to her masterpiece *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*. Afterwards she settled in Italy, because, she said, that was where so many artists had done work great enough to last, and in a favorite expression of hers, "I'm on the productive side." Her work too will last. R.I.P.

POLITICS

Before the Fall

REPUBLICANS on Capitol Hill seem more interested in complaining about the Bush administration than in winning, or at least limiting their losses in, the midterm elections. The White House is arrogant; it is out of touch; it does not face the same electoral pressures we do: We have heard it all before, and there is truth in each complaint. But perhaps the recriminations can wait until after the elections?

Congress is not going to be in session for many more days this year. There is not much time for congressional Republicans to promote popular legislation as a way of improving their standing—even if one assumed, contrary to fact, that they could agree on what legislation that would be. Their fate

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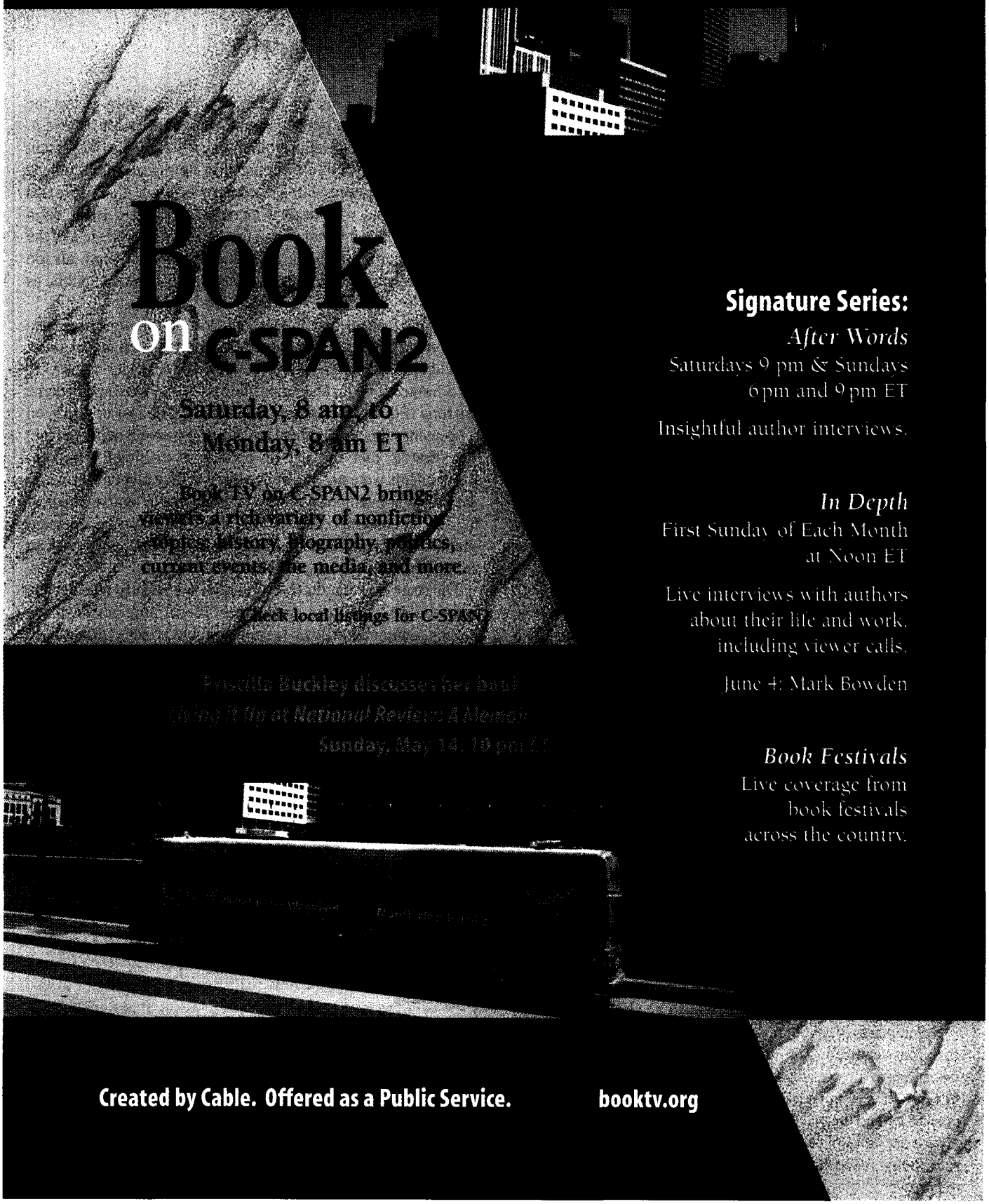

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is therefore tied to the president's. If the election is held with Bush holding a 35 percent approval rating, they will lose the House. If Bush rises to 45 percent by the fall, they will do fine.

Moreover, Bush is the only Republican official with an interest in the health of the party nationally. Some presidential contenders can calculate that harm to the party will make them look better cast in the role of a savior. Most congressmen know that rain or shine, they will be reelected (although whether they will be reelected to the majority or a minority is an open question). If Republicans are going to recover, Bush is going to have to lead them.

And they are going to have to do a better job of following. That does not mean that Republicans should mute their criticisms of Bush when they honestly think he is mistaken. It does mean that they should not be looking for ways to distance themselves from him. Congressmen should try to spread the good economic news in their districts before carping at Bush's failure to do the same thing nationally. When there is progress in Iraq, or when bad news is being exaggerated, they have to say so instead of expecting the White House to clear up the record. (American casualties have been falling for months. If Americans don't hear that from their congressmen, they're certainly not going to hear it from Katie Couric.) Most Republican congressmen believe that the NSA wiretaps are important to protecting America. Perhaps they should say so. National security is mainly, but not exclusively, an executive responsibility.

Republicans missed the opportunity to start the year with a tough package of ethics, lobbying, and spending reforms. Congressmen did not want to give up their perks, and Bush refused to intervene. It is not too late, however, for congressional Republicans to take action—and for Bush to demand it, in public, if they balk. On immigration, Republicans should, if possible, enact an enforcement-first bill and pledge to take up the guest-worker and amnesty issues in a year or two, when border-security benchmarks have been met. If that is not possible, they should shelve the whole topic for now. There is no political upside to passing a bill that will offend conservatives without pleasing the public.

Senate Republicans should push to confirm Bush's nominees to federal appeals courts—and force Democrats to defend putting social liberalism ahead of the law. Congressional Republicans should restrain spending growth this year. Bush should insist on it. He can start by vetoing the "supplemental" spending bill Congress is now cooking up. In the name of Katrina relief, it would spend $700 million to move a just-rebuilt train route a few miles to help some casinos.

Republicans are set to make a modest improvement in health care this year, reducing regulations on small businesses that want to provide coverage for their workers. And they must try to revive their signature domestic issue: taxes. They ought to push to extend the tax cuts that have fueled the economic recovery we are in. Looking down the road, they should endorse a tax reform that reduces the tax burden on families.

Even if they recover some spirit and energy, Republicans are likely to lose seats this fall. But they have some influence over whether this election is a setback or a rout. It is up to them how they wish to use it.

IMMIGRATION

No Left Turn

THE latest line from the open-borders lobby is that the American public is now with them. Don't believe it. The latest Gallup poll, from early April, has 47 percent of the public thinking that immigration should be decreased, compared with 35 percent who want it left as is and only 15 percent who want it increased. President Bush, John McCain, the Chamber of Commerce, and much of the rest of the great and good are siding with that 15 percent—and, all too often, condemning the great majority of the American public as "yahoos."

It is true that some poll questions, read in isolation, appear to support the president. The same Gallup poll asked if illegal aliens should all be deported, should be allowed to remain in the U.S. for a limited time, or should be allowed to stay here and become citizens if they meet certain conditions. The last option won 63 percent support. But there are two things worth noticing here. The first is that the list of options is artificially limited. Respondents were not allowed to say that they favored shrinking the illegal population over time by stepping up enforcement of the law. A contemporaneous Fox News poll shows 57 percent support for "trying to send as many illegal immigrants back to their home countries as possible."

The second is that the question does not specify whether the law would be enforced against new illegal immigrants. If we brought immigration down to a manageable, which is to say more easily assimilable, level—by, for example, bringing the arrival rate of new illegals down to a fraction of what it is now while leaving legal-immigration levels unchanged—then we might favor lenient treatment for some of the illegal immigrants already here ourselves.

To put it another way: Amnesty is not the most objectionable feature of the president's plan. It is the combination of amnesty with laxity in enforcement and a new guest-worker program to which we object. If we are not going to require employers to take the simplest steps to verify the legal status of their employees, then an amnesty will simply act as a magnet for more illegal immigration in the future.

Gallup also has the country evenly split on the merits of building a wall along the Mexican border. Fox News finds 73 percent wanting "fines and criminal charges against employers who hire illegal immigrants." The only real change in the politics of this issue isn't any new support for open borders. It is Republicans' increased fear, brought on by the illegal-immigrant rallies and the ecstatic media coverage thereof, of being labeled racist or anti-immigrant.

The wisest course for Republicans would be to say something like the following: "Immigration has made this country better. Immigration can continue to work for America if we make sure that it proceeds in an orderly, manageable, and rational way. We

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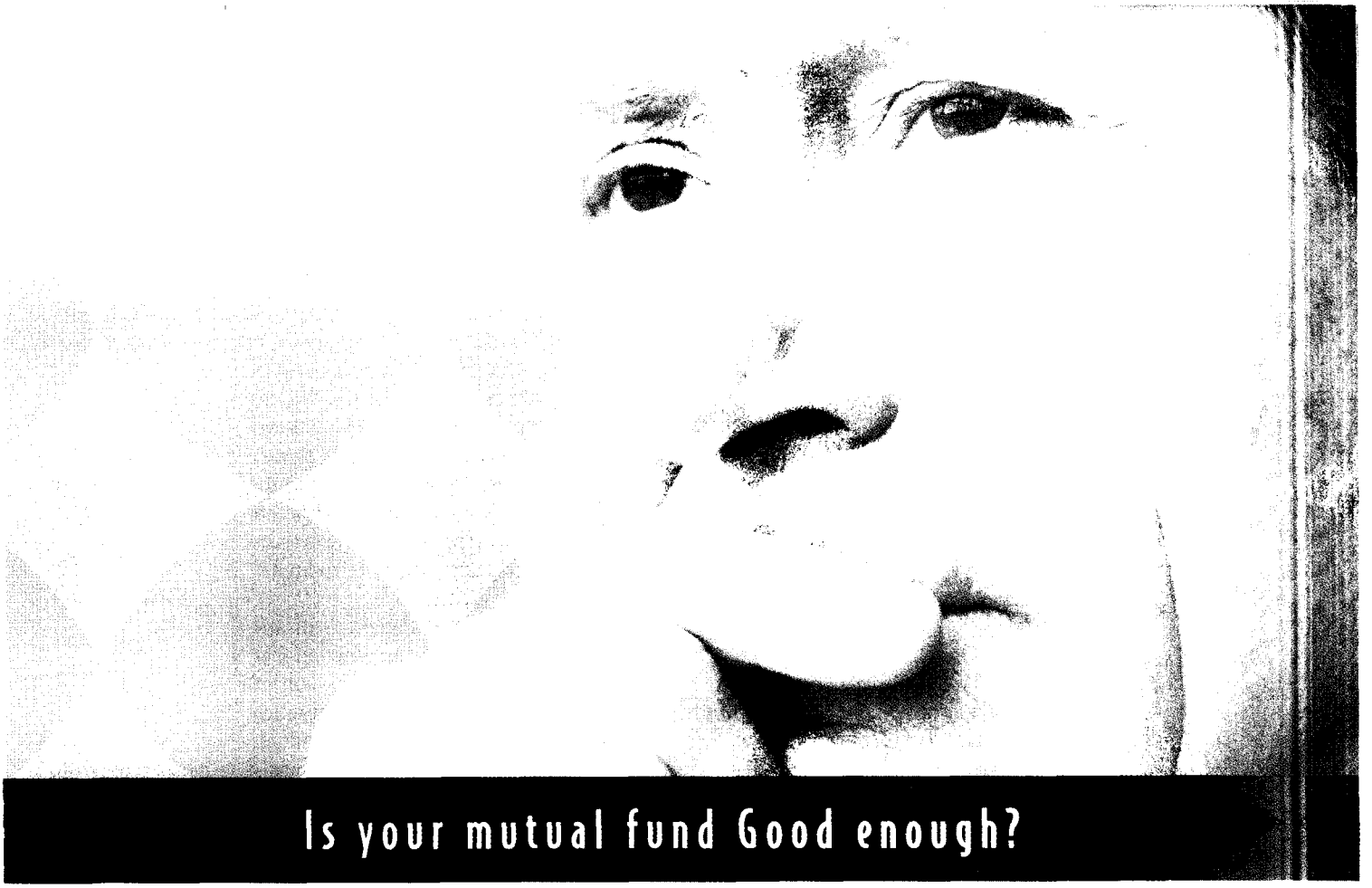

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will enforce our laws at the border and the workplace. Once we have brought illegal immigration under control, we will consider increasing legal immigration levels and granting an amnesty to some illegal immigrants who are already here. Whatever we decide, we will at all times treat illegal immigrants humanely."

Republicans who defend these views will of course be called racist and anti-immigrant (sometimes by conservatives who should know better). The response should be that anyone who makes that accusation is calling the American public racist—which isn't a winning election platform.

AT WAR

Fall Guy

THE last few weeks could be called "The Army's Revenge." There had been resentment toward Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld from the beginning over his attempts to transform the military into a lighter, more modern force. Now, a handful of retired generals have been able to draw blood with their recent calls for Rumsfeld to step aside (four of them served in the Army, the other two in the Marines).

As a political matter, Rumsfeld's leaving under this kind of fire would play as an admission that the critics who say the Iraq War was fundamentally botched have been right all along. The White House realizes this, which is one reason President Bush has so strongly supported Rumsfeld. That retired generals are criticizing a defense secretary is not, per se, a threat to civil-military relations. But there is something unseemly about it, considering that most of them apparently kept conveniently quiet about their misgivings while in uniform.

More important, the criticisms of Rumsfeld don't have much force. Some say he is too imperious. This charge isn't hard to believe of the strong-willed Rumsfeld, but it is disappointing that generals are apparently so easily cowed that their only recourse when dealing with a muscular SecDef is to whine about it after the fact. Others complain about his "micromanagement" of the war. It is true that Rumsfeld has exercised a remarkably strong hand. In planning for the initial Iraq invasion, he was relentless in challenging the work of CENTCOM commander Tommy Franks, driving him to come up with a plan that wasn't just an unimaginative repeat of Desert Storm. Even such Rumsfeld critics as *Cobra II* authors Michael Gordon and Gen. Bernard Trainor credit the innovation and effectiveness of the invasion.

There is no reason to think that the assumption behind the criticism of Rumsfeld as a micromanager—that if only the generals had been left to their own devices, things would have turned out fine—is true. Rumsfeld should be faulted for not micromanaging Franks enough when it came to planning for postwar operations, in which the general had little or no interest.

Some of the retired generals blame Rumsfeld for not providing enough troops to secure Iraq. This is now a hoary debate, and a reasonable case can be made that more troops were necessary. But if there were officers who wanted larger force levels, there were others who did not. Rumsfeld routinely consulted with his chairmen of the Joint Chiefs—first Richard Myers and then Peter Pace—and other top commanders, who agreed that it wasn't more U.S. forces but more Iraqi forces that were the key to victory.

There is, finally, a root-and-branch criticism that Generals Zinni and Newbold make. They say the Iraq War was a foolish endeavor to begin with, and insist that there is nothing wrong with the Middle East that can't be fixed by cracking down on Israel. Theirs isn't a criticism of Rumsfeld, but of President Bush and his entire foreign policy. They surely would be no happier with any replacement defense secretary who is equally committed to implementing Bush's vision.

The debate over Rumsfeld is disappointing in its simplistic assumption that the long, hard slog in Iraq is the fault of one man.

The debate over Rumsfeld is disappointing in its simplistic assumption that the long, hard slog in Iraq is the fault of one man. There were plenty of mistakes made in Iraq, and there is blame enough to go around. The important questions now have to do with how to prevail in the current conditions in Iraq, and on this the retired generals have little to say, exposing their lack of seriousness. If winning or gaining in the war were a simple matter of sacking Rumsfeld, we'd favor doing it immediately. Alas, it isn't nearly that simple.

IRAN

Unacceptable

FOUR years ago, President Bush said his administration would not "permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons." Yet precisely that is about to happen. With Iran's announcement that it has begun uranium enrichment, we know that the world's *most* dangerous regime is on a fast track to building an atomic bomb.

Atomic bombs are only as scary as the regimes that own them—but this one is about as bad as they come. The mullahs would surely threaten us with their arsenal to extract concessions inimical to our interests, and might even be evil enough to launch their nukes. Consider Hashemi Rafsanjani, that celebrated "moderate," exulting that the Muslim world will "vomit [Israel] out from its midst," since "a single atomic bomb has the power to completely destroy [it]." Nuclear deterrence operates on the assumption that your foe is rational. Things break down when much of its ruling establishment fancies itself on a divine mission to evaporate the Zionist Entity, roll back the Great Satan, and usher in a paradisiacal rule by sharia. That's not a regime to bargain with. The goal must be to remove it from power.

This doesn't mean invasion and occupation. But it does mean getting serious about supporting the Iranian democracy movement. There are three things we should do now. First, give financial backing to Iranian labor unions so that workers—many of whom are deeply discontent with their government—can feed

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their families if they go on strike. Second, help Iranian student groups. Roughly 70 percent of Iran's population is under 30. These youths are the most pro-Western segment of Iranian society—and they are mad as hell at Iran's rulers. We should open channels of communication with student leaders, and repeat their message at every turn. Accordingly, our third priority should be to massively increase our pro-democracy broadcasts into Iran.

None of this is guaranteed to spark a revolution, but it has better odds than doing nothing. The sad consequence of our delay—and the world's indifference—has been to make military action more likely. While a bombing campaign can't stop Iran from eventually building nukes, it can delay that outcome by several years. But then what? If the mullahs stay in power, all that will change is the intensity of their lust for a bomb. We shouldn't hesitate to use military force if that's what it takes to keep them from getting one, but no air strikes will be effective over the long term unless coupled with an aggressive strategy to topple the regime from within.

Make no mistake: Bombing Iran is not a good option. The mullahs would probably retaliate with terrorist attacks against U.S. interests worldwide, as well as efforts to destabilize Iraq. But the alternative—letting them go nuclear—is incalculably worse. For a quarter-century they have been fighting an undeclared war against the West with the only weapons they have had: terrorism and a poisonous ideology. For a quarter-century we have failed to respond. They now stand on the brink of getting a new weapon—and this one will let them threaten the incineration of millions of infidels at the push of a button. Is this something that we—that *anyone*—should be willing to live with?

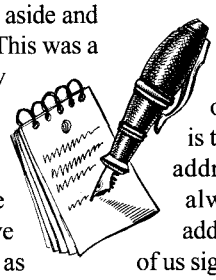
notes & asides

■ **William Sloane Coffin, RIP**
A Personal Obituary

It was the routine, when Charles Seymour was the president of Yale, that the chairman (as we were then designated) of the *Yale Daily News* should visit with President Seymour for a half hour every week, mutual conduits for information in both directions. We became friends, and he told me one time with some enthusiasm that the student speaker at the annual Alumni Day lunch at the Freshman Commons the day before had given "the single most eloquent talk I have ever heard from an undergraduate." I thought hard about that comment one year later when I was selected to give the annual talk to the alumni, which speech moved nobody at all because the day before, the text having been examined by public-relations director Richard Lee, I was asked to be so kind as to withdraw; and I did. (What I did with the speech was stick it into the appendix of *God and Man at Yale*).

I didn't meet William Sloane Coffin until some while later, when of course I congratulated him on electing the correct political extremity in the controversies of the day. He was never slow to catch an irony, and his wink brought on a trans-ideological friendship which induced great pleasure. The friendship was publicly confirmed by Coffin with an extraordinary gesture. Garry Trudeau was lining up speakers for an event celebrating the 30th reunion of his class. His reunion coincided with the 50th reunion of my own class, and he came to me and asked if I would consent to debate with Bill Coffin as I had done during Trudeau's freshman year, 1966.

Well, I said, okay, though I was sure that Charles Seymour's estimate of successful speakers would prevail yet again. But there was a remarkable feature of that afternoon. I climbed the steps at the Yale Law School Auditorium to extend a hand to Bill Coffin—who brushed it aside and embraced me with both arms. This was a dramatic act. It was testimony not only to Coffin's wide Christian gateway to the unfaithful, but also to his extraordinary histrionic skills. I'd have lost the argument anyway. I have defended my political faith as often as Coffin did his own, but you cannot, in the end, win an argument against someone who is offering free health care and an end to nuclear bombs. But there was never any hope for survival after his public embrace.



We were always, however lightly, in touch. "Sweet William," he addressed me in June 2003, enclosing a copy of a speech he had delivered at Yale the week before. "The enclosed speech to the Class of '68, you will be sorry to hear, was received with tumultuous applause. Don't worry, however, you, alas, represent the ruling view. I hope you feel with St. Paul, 'Though our outer nature is wasted away our inner nature is being renewed each day.' Affectionately as always, Bill."

I replied, "Wm, I am not surprised your speech was greeted by tumultuous applause. That is what demagogy is designed to do, dear William." He replied some months later, enclosing a copy of a page from the *Boston Globe* in which both of us were quoted. "Dear Wm, Could it be that in this time and our old age we might be on the same page? Do let me know. Affectionately, Bill (aka Wm)."

I replied that I had seen his new book, *Letters to a Young Doubter*. ". . . I think of you often, and did so most directly when I published, a fortnight ago, the obituary I did on William F. Rickenbacker. He is the only other fleeted spirit I ever addressed as Dear Wm, which he always reciprocated with letters addressed to me as Dear Wm—both of us signing off as . . . Wm. As I do now, anxious to get a note off to you, especially since you have taken to writing books again, instead of reproachful letters to, your pal—

"Wm."

Our disagreements were heated, and it is through the exercise of much restraint that I forbear doing more than merely recording that they were—heated; on my way, heatedly, to recording that Bill Coffin was a bird of paradise, and to extending my sympathy to all who, however thoughtlessly, lament his failure to bring the world around to his views.

—WFB

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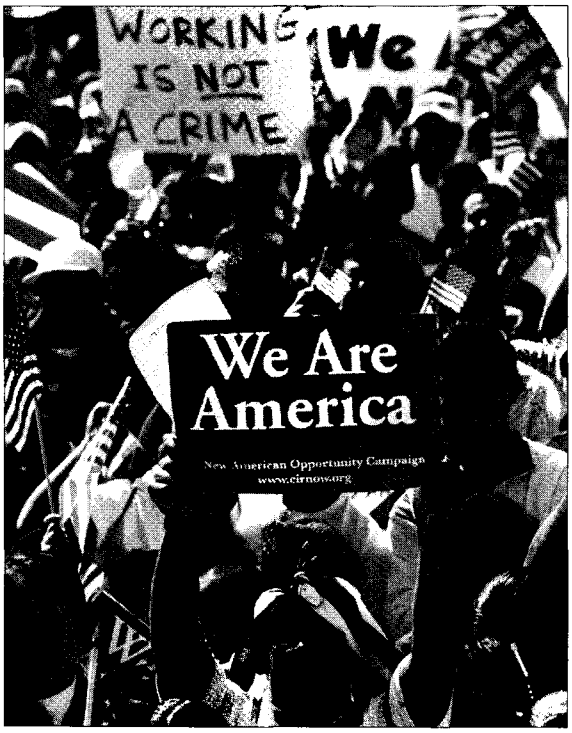

JASON REED/REUTERS

■ THE NATION ■

Illegal Immigrants, Unite!

And under the union banner, too

BYRON YORK

At the big pro-illegal-immigration rally on the Mall in Washington on April 10, thousands of demonstrators held aloft dark blue signs that read, "We Are America." Below those words, in smaller letters, was the name "New American Opportunity Campaign," and below that was a web address, www.cirnow.org.

Although not obvious at first glance, the small print on the signs said something important about the aggressive new drive to win acceptance of illegal immigrants. A visit to the website www.cirnow.org—those letters stand for "Comprehensive Immigration Reform Now"—leads to a site for the New American Opportunity Campaign, which in turn leads to a request for donations to an organization called the Coalition for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. "Opportunities should be provided for undocumented immigrants currently living in the U.S. to receive work permits and travel permission and access educational opportunities once they undergo background and security checks," says the groups' platform. "Those who want to settle in the United States should be eligible for permanent residence and citizenship." Both organizations list the same address: 1775 K Street NW, Suite 620, in downtown Washington.

As it happens, that is the Washington headquarters of UNITE HERE, the labor union formed a few years ago by the merger of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees, and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union. UNITE HERE—which represents about 460,000 workers in the U.S. and Canada but hopes to unionize millions of newly arrived, low-paid, unskilled immigrant workers—played a major role in organizing the Washington rally, as well as other pro-illegal-immigration events across the country.

Joining UNITE HERE in the immigration fight is the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which represents about 1.8 million workers in the U.S. and Canada. "You need to legalize the 11 million people who are here on an undocumented status," a top SEIU official told the liberal Air America radio network recently. "Many of them are our members." The chief organizer and spokesman of the Washington rally was a man named Jaime Contreras, who heads the local SEIU chapter and is also in charge of what is called the National Capital Immigration Coalition, a mix of labor, business, church, and civil-rights groups that staged the event.

In fact, SEIU and UNITE HERE, along with a few others like the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, are key sources of money, talent, and organization in the nationwide campaign to legalize illegal immigrants. "The leadership of organized labor is one of the reasons these marches have been so big," says Mark Krikorian, executive director of the pro-enforcement Center for Immigration Studies, "because there is [a union] infrastructure everywhere to get people mobilized, to rent the buses, to print the signs. All that stuff is important, and that's the advantage that organized labor still has."

The involvement of major unions represents an extraordinary change from just 20 years ago, when labor, embracing the generally accepted proposition that importing millions of low-wage workers would drive down the wages of American workers, still played its traditional role of working to limit illegal immigration and to punish employers for hiring illegal aliens. "Historically, American labor unions have defended the American worker, and immigration has been secondary," says Vernon Briggs, a professor of labor economics at Cornell University. "The labor-union movement was founded mostly by immigrants—Samuel Gompers was an immigrant—but it never confused the immigrant agenda with the interest of American workers."

Why the change? It's all about political power—a labor movement on the decline

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hoping that a growing immigrant population will help it reclaim the political clout of years past. As recently as the 1980s, the portion of the American workforce that was unionized stood at about 20 percent. Now, it's 12.5 percent. With that decline has come declining political influence; the plain fact is that union leaders cannot deliver the votes they could in the past. Even with high voter turnout among union households, the unions' clout is disappearing. To regain some of their old influence, they must have new members.

And where to find those new members? Among the ranks of illegal, unskilled, low-paid immigrants. "This is something where the unions were affected by their shifting base, by the composition of their own memberships," says the liberal, pro-union writer Harold Meyerson. Looking around at the big crowd on the Mall, Meyerson adds, "That's what drove this, I think, more than anything else—and the realization that if they are going to continue to grow, given the sectors they've targeted, there are lots of immigrants in those sectors. So it's why Willie Sutton robbed banks. If there are new members to be had, that's where they are."

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And, should the unions' program be enacted into law, new members will ultimately mean new—and overwhelmingly Democratic—voters. "Today we march," Jaime Contreras told the rally in Washington. "Tomorrow we vote!"

The rallies in Washington and Los Angeles and Chicago and Dallas and dozens of other cities—each attended by tens of thousands of people waving American flags—presented a picture of a unity. But that unity does not extend to the entire labor movement, because what is good for unions like SEIU and UNITE HERE is not necessarily good for all unions. Has anyone seen the United Auto Workers at the forefront of the pro-illegal-immigration movement? No, and it's not likely to happen anytime soon. But the fact is that the UAW is losing influence in the labor movement. In mid-April, the Labor Department announced that the union lost more than 65,000 members in 2005, bringing its total membership to about 557,000 workers—a figure far below its peak, in 1970, of 1.6 million workers. With fewer jobs to protect, and dramatic downsizing among its workers at General Motors and Ford, the UAW—along with other old-line groups like the miners—has little influence on the direction that organized labor is taking on the immigration issue. "They are yesterday's unions," says Mark Krikorian. "The membership is older, they are in industries that are having real problems. They are not going to have the same kind of pull within the councils of organized labor."

So organized labor has moved on. The key event in its evolution came in 2000, when the AFL-CIO executive council abandoned its support of employee sanctions and instead voted in favor of giving amnesty to all illegal immigrants (about 6 million at the time). "The world has changed, and it hasn't just changed for unions," John Wilhelm, president of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (before its merger with UNITE), told the *Los Angeles Times* in February 2000. "I'm not so sure people aren't rethinking earlier views. From a cold political perspective, if the labor movement and the immigrant communities and churches can generate sufficient momentum, I'm not so sure that we can't be successful."

They have not yet reached their goal—amnesty—but there's no denying that they have made significant progress. And for unions like SEIU and UNITE HERE, more members will likely mean more progress. "They really do believe that this is their ticket to increased numbers in the future," says Vernon Briggs. The formula is simple: More immigrants means more members means more influence and, ultimately, more voters. So far, it's working. **NR**

■ THE MEDIA

A Gotcha! Gone Bad

How the get-Bush mentality leads to dumb errors

ANDREW C. MCCARTHY

"CHENEY's Aide Says President Approved Leak." So blared the Page One headline of the April 7 *New York Times*. It is a story as old as The Flood that the mainstream media are adamantine in their bias against the Bush presidency in general and the Iraq War in particular. But every now and again, the press outdoes itself.

"Cheney's Aide," of course, is I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, the vice president's former chief of staff. The leak with which he has heretofore been associated is the disclosure of the name of Valerie Plame Wilson as a CIA undercover officer, for which, after much cheerleading by the media, he has been indicted. Except that . . . a) Libby wasn't indicted for the leak, which does not appear to have been a crime, but for allegedly lying to government investigators about his conversations with three reporters; b) it does not appear that Libby actually disclosed anything about Plame that wasn't already known within media circles; and c) it's not at all clear that Plame was a CIA undercover officer, because the government refuses to reveal that information (claiming it is irrelevant to the charges, despite the prosecutor's explicit statement—in a press conference announcing the indictment—that "Valerie [Plame] was a CIA officer").

In other words, the currency of this leak, once hyped by the administration's antagonists as a major national-security scandal, has substantially deflated. No small thanks are owed in this regard to the media's deafening yawn in the face of

Mr. McCarthy, a former federal prosecutor, is a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

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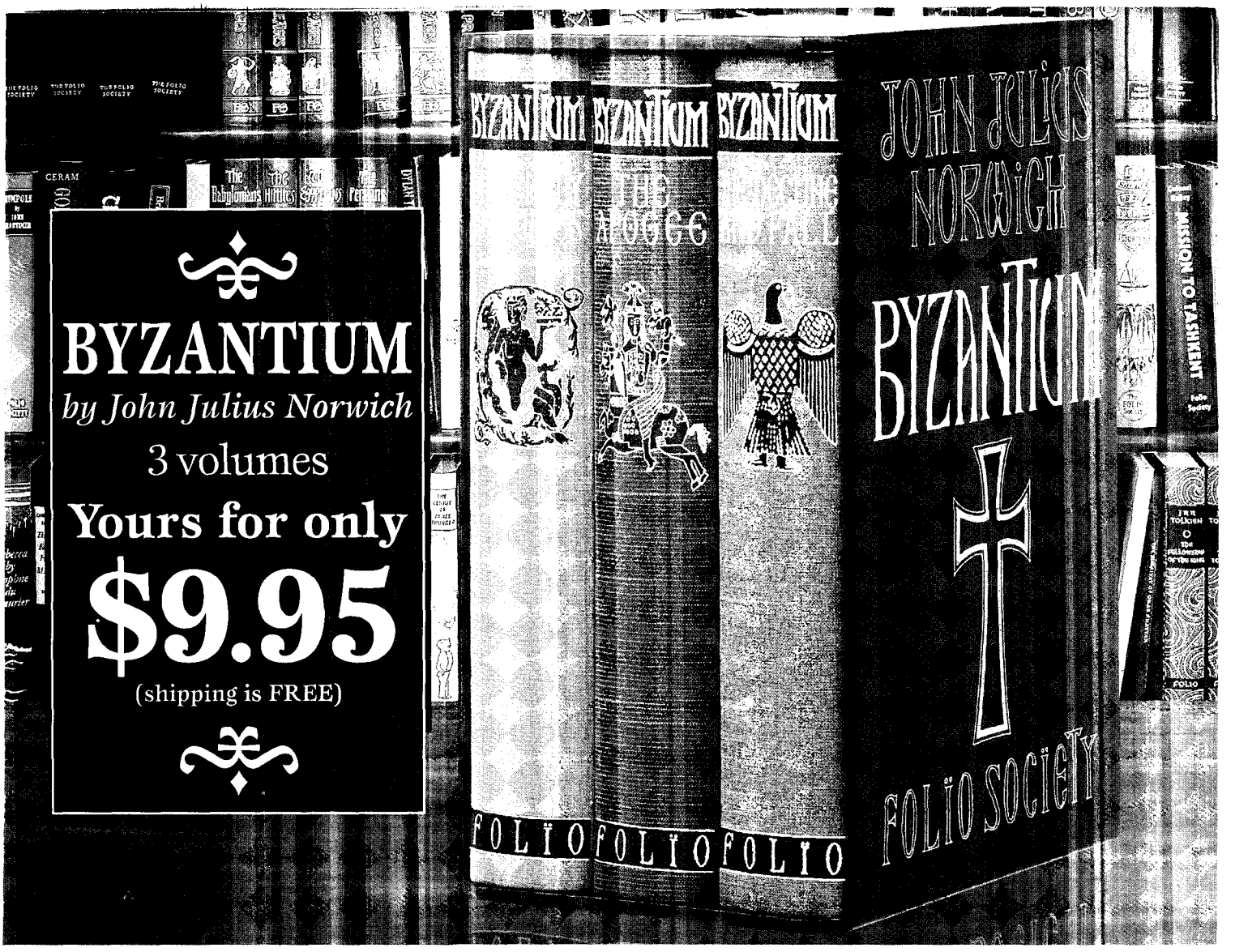

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other leaks—e.g., those concerning the National Security Agency's terrorist-surveillance program and the CIA's arrangements for housing high-level al-Qaeda prisoners—that actually did damage national security and against which the Plame imbroglio is aptly seen as a trifle.

Still, it would be big news if it turned out that President Bush had authorized the now-infamous Libby leak. Naturally, such would be the assumption of anyone casually following the Libby/Plame narrative who happened to catch the *Times*'s headline. On April 7, however, this leak was not *the* "Leak." The *Times* was not talking about Plame at all—an inconvenience the paper of record finally got around to acknowledging several paragraphs into its story.

Instead, the media, arm-in-arm with the leading Democrats they champion, had gone to DEFCON 4 over a "leak" from the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), a composite crafted by the agencies of the U.S. intelligence community. Specifically, Libby is reported to have testified that, in July 2003, with the express approval of President Bush (communicated to Libby by his boss, Vice President Cheney), he shared with the *Times*'s Judith Miller some of the NIE's contents regarding Saddam Hussein's efforts to build nuclear capability.

Miller was obviously so enthralled by the "news" that a dictator who had a long history of seeking (and using) weapons of mass destruction was, well, seeking weapons of mass destruction that she didn't even bother to write a story about Libby's tip. Still, top Democrats were atwitter at the revelation of the testimony (in a court filing by the independent counsel handling Libby's prosecution). "In light of today's shocking revelation," Senate minority leader Harry Reid insisted, "President Bush must fully disclose his participation in the selective leaking of classified information." Jane Harman, the ranking member on the House Intelligence Committee, chimed in: "If the disclosure is true, it's breathtaking. The president is revealed as the leaker in chief."

To say this latest choreographed 'scandal' is nonsense is to give nonsense a bad name.

To say this latest choreographed "scandal" is nonsense is to give nonsense a bad name. Having rendered a high administration official (Libby) radioactive with an (apparently false) accusation of illegally leaking classified information (viz., the Plame disclosure), the media have now attached his name and that baggage to a routine communication of non-classified information to a reporter, made for the purpose of clarifying the administration's actions in a matter of public importance—something done every day, and done by all administrations of both parties.

In July 2003, you may recall, the air was thick with controversy over whether the Bush administration had exaggerated intelligence in order to justify the invasion of Iraq. In the vanguard of such accusations was Joseph Wilson, a former ambassador. Wilson had penned a misleading op-ed in the *Times* (in addition to his sundry anonymous leaks) in which he claimed, falsely, both that he had been tasked by Vice President Cheney, via the CIA, to go to Niger to investigate whether Saddam Hussein had really sought uranium ore there, and that he had found no evidence to that effect. Wilson, in reality, had not been tasked by Cheney; had been selected by the CIA for the mission through the intercession of his wife, Valerie Plame (like her husband, a Kerry supporter and Iraq naysayer); and had, while in Niger, stumbled on indicators that actually tended to confirm Iraq's efforts to acquire uranium.

Consequently, when Libby met with Miller, he was authorized to reveal information that put the lie to Wilson's tale. This could be considered a "leak" only in the sense that the administration steered information to a particular reporter rather than broadcasting it at large in, say, a presidential speech. But it cannot conceivably have been—as the media and Democrats repeatedly maintained—a *classified* leak.

Preliminarily, it bears observing that resorting to the NIE as grist for a scandal was especially bogus. The NIE is assembled with the understanding that some of it will be made public. As already noted, that is exactly what was done here. Nonetheless, in their determination to portray the president as an untrustworthy schemer, the media upped the ante: Libby had not just leaked the NIE at Bush's direction; he had also misrepresented it.

According to reports, Libby had claimed to Miller that the conclusion that Iraq was "vigorously trying to procure" uranium had been among the NIE's "key judgments," meaning it was the subject of consensus among the intelligence community. No, the media squealed: This had been a mere *suggestion* of the NIE, not a weighty *key judgment*—making for another *gotcha!* moment in the history of Bush's lies. Except that the whole thing turned out to be wrong. Even as the media went into overdrive, the independent counsel, Patrick Fitzgerald (a friend and former colleague of mine), submitted a letter to the judge in Libby's case, explaining that his submission—the cause of all the fuss—had been in error. It should have said that Libby was authorized to reveal some of the key judgments of the NIE and, *separately*, that Iraq had sought uranium; not that the latter was a key judgment. In effect, Libby had framed things accurately. It was the press that was guilty of exaggerating the intelligence.

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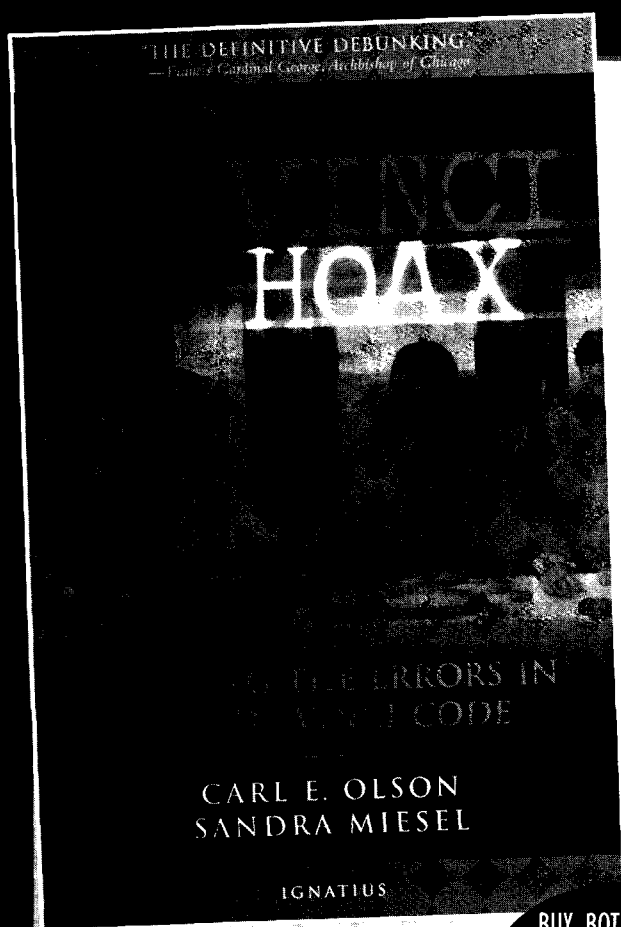

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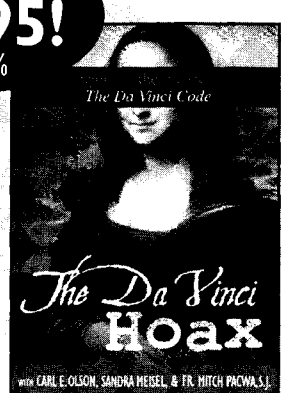

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Furthermore, classified information by nature *cannot* be leaked by the president. It belongs to the executive branch, of which the president is the unitary chief. Once he authorizes the disclosure of information, it is no longer classified. To be sure, such declassification decisions can be unwise; but they cannot be illegal, for this is a judgment call the president gets to make.

It is a decision that presidents typically make amid political strife. The executive branch has all manner of information that it would prefer, for a variety of sound strategic reasons, to keep confidential. Yet governance is freighted with politics: When public opinion is being led astray by one-sided political attacks, and when important policy is threatened by misinformation, all administrations must balance the benefits of secrecy against the need that the public learn the truth.

Examples are too numerous to catalogue. To counter the Soviet missile threat in 1962, for example, the Kennedy administration chose to reveal publicly its satellite-surveillance capacity. This proved that Cuba was being used as a platform, but gave the Soviets critical insight into U.S. capabilities. In 1998, to beat back detractors embarked on a withering attack against its air strike against a Sudanese pharmaceutical factory after the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Clinton administration selectively disclosed previously classified information that suggested that the factory was a joint Iraq/al-Qaeda chemical-weapons venture. Indeed, the *Washington Post* reported at the time that Richard Clarke, the administration's top counter-terrorism official, had explained that, in light of the existing intelligence, Clinton "would have been derelict in his duties if he didn't blow up the facility."

The difference here, patently, is the loathing the media harbor for the Bush administration. They proclaim loudly that the public's right to know is sacrosanct—except, of course, when it comes to the public's right to know that a media-made icon (even one of the 15-minute variety, like Joseph Wilson) is a hack; except when it comes to evidence underscoring that Saddam was a danger; except when it comes to facts that vindicate George W. Bush. Then, the story is never the story. The story is the leak. Any leak. **NR**

■ CAPITOL HILL

Pork Busters, And Keepers

A telling fight among Republicans

STEPHEN SPRUIELL

At the eleventh hour, House Republicans failed to pass a budget resolution before leaving for a two-week break. A tenuous deal between fiscal conservatives and the House leadership collapsed when big-spending Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee threatened to torpedo the bill on the floor. Most budget fights are over line items, but this one is over a bigger issue: Congress's power to spend money. When conservatives proposed some reforms to curtail that power, Republican appropriators shut down the negotiations.

Like a collapsing civilization, the GOP majority seems unable to uphold the values that lifted it to prominence. Republicans who seek to regain the trust of fiscal conservatives through spending cuts are losing ground to appropriators and moderates who want to spend their way out of their political problems. Unless the House leadership brings the big spenders under control, the Republican party that took over in 1994 will continue to disappear.

The road to the current impasse starts in New Orleans. Fiscal conservatives, led by Indiana congressman Mike Pence's Republican Study Committee (RSC), started campaigning relentlessly for spending cuts when Hurricane Katrina precipitated a spree of federal pork disguised as emergency relief. Shortly after Katrina struck, Congress hastily appropriated over $10 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for disaster relief. A week later, President Bush asked for—and Congress approved—over $50 billion more.

This extravagance alarmed the RSC, but few members would vote against such politically sensitive emergency bills, so Pence and his group came up with another plan. They drew up a list of unnecessary, wasteful, or redundant government programs that could be cut in order to pay for Katrina relief, held a series of press events, and called their effort "Operation Offset." These conservatives were rebuffed, however, when they brought their ideas to the Republican leadership. Then–House majority leader Tom DeLay said there weren't any offsets in the budget because, as he infamously told the *Washington Times*, "after 11 years of Republican majority we've pared it down pretty good."

The RSC eventually convinced the leadership to support modest spending cuts in the budget-reconciliation bill last February, but the $39 billion in savings fell far short of offsetting the Katrina spending. In addition, the RSC's fears that the billions appropriated for hurricane relief would be vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse proved well-founded. The *Washington Post* reported that FEMA had squandered 60 percent of the $10 billion from the first emergency bill on a wasteful mobile-home program that benefited only 10 percent of the households affected by Katrina, while 80 percent of the households were helped through rental assistance at a third of the cost.

Which brings us to the current budget resolution. After the Katrina mess, fiscal conservatives pledged to fix the broken system that allows Congress to appropriate vast sums of emergency dollars with little or no oversight. First, conservatives want to define "emergency": Hurricane Katrina was a true emergency, but Congress often uses "emergency supplementals" as a way to circumvent the budget process. For instance, Congress has funded the war in Iraq as an emergency supplemental ever since it began. Because of the urgency of supplying our troops, these are must-pass bills—and their status as such leads members to load them up with pork. In the Iraq supplemental currently before the Senate, the Heritage Foundation found $4 billion in farm bailouts and $700 million to reroute a rail line. To put an end to this, Rep. Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) has drafted legislation defining emergencies as "sudden, urgent, unforeseen, and temporary."

Hurricanes would meet all of these criteria, so conservatives have proposed another reform to govern such real emergencies,

Mr. Spruiell writes the media blog for National Review Online.

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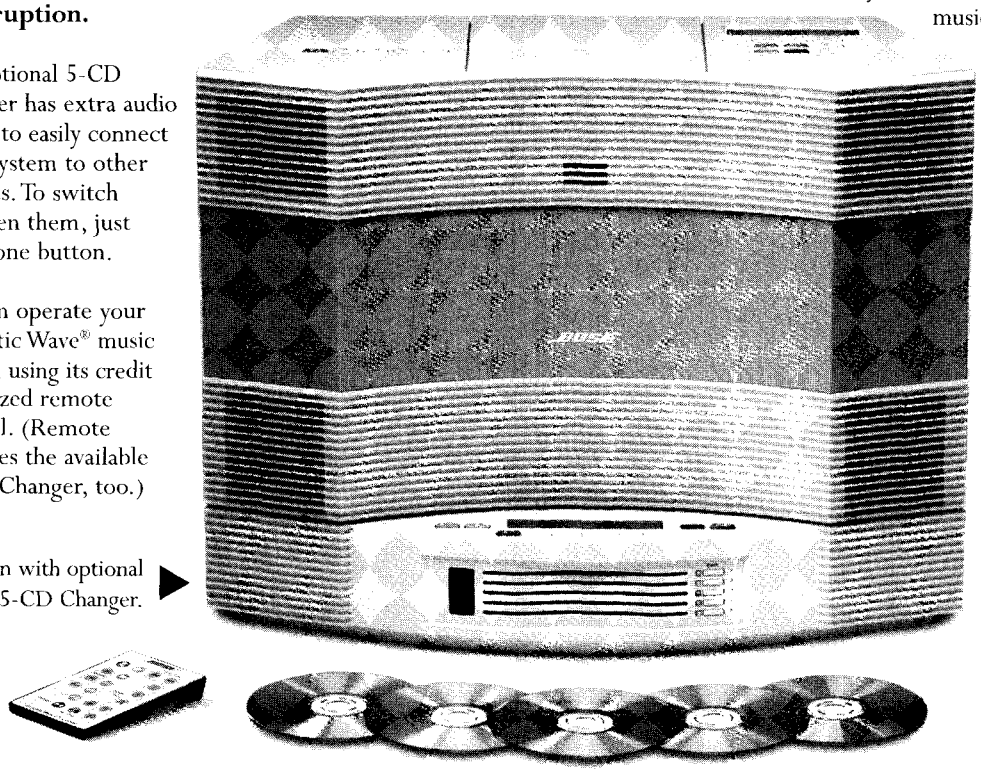

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so that Congress won't exploit them to give away money with too little oversight. Ryan's legislation demands that each year Congress include a certain amount of emergency spending in the budget. Emergency spending in excess of that "rainy-day fund" would have to go to the House Budget Committee for a vote.

Reforms like these would not have been possible just a few years ago, but the runaway spending of the last five years has energized House conservatives. In the election to replace Tom DeLay as majority leader, these conservatives elevated Ohio's John Boehner; having voiced commitment to budget reforms during his campaign, Boehner seemed like a leader the RSC could work with after years of frustration.

As members began to negotiate the budget, modest reform looked possible. The leadership agreed to put a "rainy-day fund" into the budget and to require that spending over that limit get a separate vote. "We found ourselves in the unfamiliar position of being in agreement with the leadership," says a senior Hill staffer close to the RSC. Conservative Republicans agreed to smaller spending cuts than they would have preferred, but moderate Republicans also compromised—dropping their demand for $7 billion in additional health and education spending. Overall, the budget resolution held discretionary spending under the president's $873 billion cap.

But then the Appropriations chairman, Jerry Lewis of California, blew the whole thing out of the water. Once he found out about the reforms—especially the limits on emergency spending—he had one of his staffers fire off an angry e-mail to the other members of the Appropriations Committee, urging them to oppose the bill. The e-mail, leaked to the National Taxpayers Union, said: "As you know, the Budget Resolution contains a so-called 'Rainy Day Fund' that would REQUIRE the Budget Committee to approve non-defense related emergency spending in excess of the amount stated within the Budget Resolution . . . Chairman Lewis has instructed us to inform you that, unless the Rainy Day Fund and this new Point of Order are dropped/not included through action of the Rules Committee tonight, he will NOT SUPPORT passage of the RULE and/or the BUDGET RESOLUTION tomorrow. He also requested that you inform your Subcommittee Chairman of his position in this regard and asks that they likewise support the Committee."

According to *National Journal*'s CongressDaily, a sufficient number of Republicans on Lewis's committee took his advice and opposed the bill. This gave cover to some moderate Republicans who weren't comfortable with the budget's fiscal restraint, and the Democrats had already indicated that they would vote together to hand the Republicans a defeat. When House leaders counted votes and realized they were short, they decided to postpone the vote until after the Easter recess.

Appearing on ABC's *This Week*, Boehner placed the blame squarely on Lewis and the appropriators. But instead of getting into the complicated subject of emergency spending—the subject of Lewis's angry e-mail—Boehner cleverly put the focus on another reason Lewis gave for opposing the deal: a rule change that would reform the practice of earmarking money for pork. The Appropriations Committee controls the earmarking process; it gets over 35,000 requests for earmarks a year. The new rules would make it easier for members to object to especially egregious earmarks.

Earmark reform is now a hot topic: The online Porkbusters movement has raised awareness of it; the Senate has passed a version of earmark reform; President Bush even addressed the issue in his State of the Union. Boehner is turning up the pressure at exactly the right time. But he and Speaker Dennis Hastert need to do more if they want to revive this budget. They need to use their power on the House GOP Steering Committee—which hands out committee assignments—as leverage against Lewis: He needs to know that his chairmanship of the Appropriations Committee is at stake.

For conservatives, this isn't about the RSC vs. the appropriators anymore. It's about the leaders vs. the appropriators, and whether the former have the political foresight to realize that their jobs depend on their ability to restore values and discipline to the Republican majority. They should begin by upholding some semblance of fiscal sanity—passing some modest budget reforms and holding the line against those Republicans who think they can stay in the majority by outspending the Democrats. **NR**

■ **AT WAR**

A Particular Madness

Understanding Iran's Ahmadinejad

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

ELECTED less than a year ago, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a president unlike any other. He is doing his utmost to alienate the entire West, mobilizing as much military technology as possible, and now enriching uranium in quantities apparently enough for hundreds of nuclear warheads. "This is the result of the Iranian nation's resistance," he boasts, and the work of "young scientists," adding that the nation does not get its strength from nuclear arsenals, but "relies on the sublime beliefs that lie within the Iranian and Islamic culture." Far from deterring him, the prospect of war, and perhaps Armageddon, is an encouragement. Those who live in democracies have become unwilling or unable to fathom anyone gambling with peace in this way—it took years to realize that Hitler and Stalin meant what they said. A huge leap of the imagination is now required to take the measure of Ahmadinejad.

The son of a blacksmith, he grew up in the provinces, and owes his career exclusively to the Islamic revolution and membership in the Revolutionary Guards, the paramilitary body responsible for the regime's security, the equivalent of the KGB or the SS. Personally he seems honest, a rare quality in Iran where corruption rules, among the clerics especially. At any rate, the ayatollahs parachuted him into the presidency to do their bidding, rather as Boris Yeltsin once promoted the then unknown Vladimir Putin. The analogy is not quite exact, since in Iran power is in the hands of the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and the presi-

Mr. Pryce-Jones is an NR senior editor. His new book, *Betrayal: France, the Arabs, and the Jews*, will be published by Encounter in the fall.

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Dr. Robert Bucholz, D.Phil., is Associate Professor of History at Loyola University of Chicago. He received his undergraduate education in history at Cornell University and his doctorate in modern history from Oxford University.

Professor Bucholz has received several awards for his teaching, including the Sujack Award for Teaching Excellence, the highest such award presented by the Loyola College of Arts and Sciences, and the Honors Program Faculty Member of the Year Award in both 1998 and 1999.

He is the author or coauthor of three books, including *The Augustan Court: Queen Anne and the Decline of Court Culture.*

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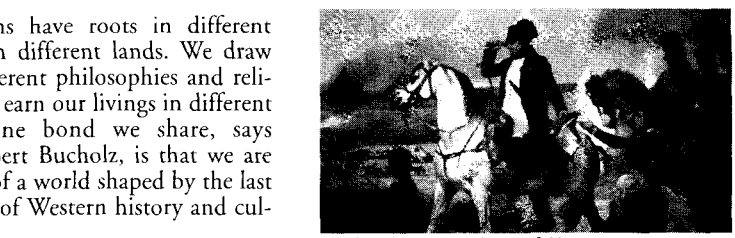

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Napoleon Bonaparte on the battlefield

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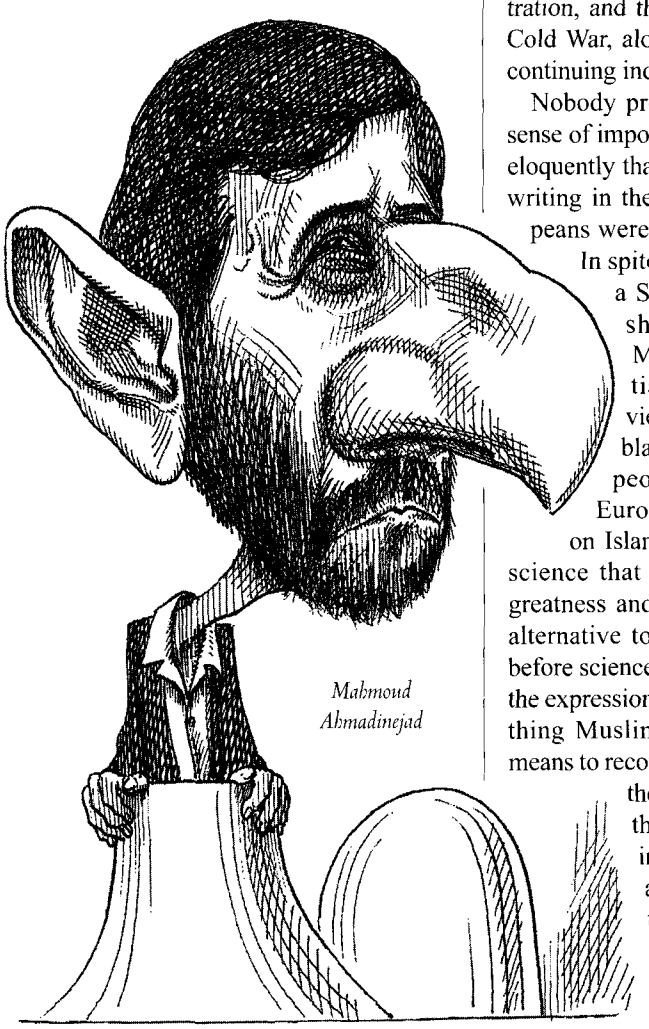
dent has the subsidiary role of ensuring the governing doctrine that "any action that weakens the sacred Islamic republic is not permissible."

To someone of such limited background and experience, the outside world is an unknown quantity. Ahmadinejad's religious beliefs are no doubt as sincere as they are narrow, and they prompt regular pronouncements in a messianic style: "The wave of the Islamist revolution will soon reach the entire world." Or again, "Our revolution's main mission is to pave the way for the reappearance of the Twelfth Imam, the Mahdi." In the middle of the 10th century, this imam went into hiding, supposedly in a well in Jamkaran, south of Tehran, but it is an article of Shiite faith that he will return and herald the End of Days. Ahmadinejad and his cabinet signed a petition to the hidden imam, proceeded to Jamkaran, and threw it down the well for his attention. Similarly unself-conscious, he claimed that while speaking at the United Nations "I became surrounded by a green light," so that for 27 to 28 minutes all the attentive listeners did not blink—the chronological exactitude is a touch a thriller writer might envy. And he closed that speech by urging God to "hasten the emergence of Your last repository, the Promised One, that perfect and pure human being, the one who will fill the world with justice and peace."



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

History has produced in Iran a volatile compound of self-regarding nationalism and religiosity, a superiority complex that switches easily into its opposite of inferiority and martyrdom. In the national memory, Cyrus, king of kings, remains a symbol of ruined empire. The Arabs swept in to impose their culture and faith, but they were Sunni Muslims, and Persians maintained their ethnic and national particularity as Shiite Muslims. In the 19th century, Russia conquered and absorbed whole provinces of Persia, and occupied still more for a while under Stalin. British resistance to Russian penetration, and then American forces in the Cold War, alone preserved the country's continuing independence.

Nobody projected the accompanying sense of impotence and humiliation more eloquently than Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, writing in the 19th century when Europeans were at their imperialist zenith. In spite of his name, Afghani was a Shiite from Persia, but he shaped a mindset for all Muslims that is still influential today. Muslims in his view were backward, but the blame for this lay with other people, and not themselves. Europeans had stolen a march on Islam unfairly. He wrote, "It is science that everywhere manifests its greatness and power. Ignorance had no alternative to prostrating itself humbly before science." For him, science was not the expression of a civilization, but something Muslims had only to copy as a means to recovering the supremacy that is theirs by rights. The reigns of the two Pahlavi shahs of Iran in the 20th century duly paid attention to science, but not to Islam. The Islamic revolution now aims to reconcile the two elements. Ahmadinejad's boast about the "young scientists" doing nuclear enrichment corresponds to the spirit of Afghani.

In another echo of Afghani, Ahmadinejad likes to lament that, "unfortunately, over the past 300 years the world of Islam has been in retreat." But he goes on to emphasize that this is changing, and centuries of humiliation at the hands of Sunni Arabs and infidel Europeans are reversing into the proper honor and glory. The prospects are tantalizing. To the north, Russia is now so reduced that it is begging to sell nuclear plants and know-how, even though one day an Iranian atomic bomb might land on its own head. To the west, Saddam Hussein is no more, and Iraq is in no position to wage another war for many years to come. Saudi Arabia and the smaller Gulf states have no genuine military capacity. The Shiites are certain in the end to dominate the government in Baghdad, and their power already reaches into Syria, and through Hezbollah into Lebanon.

The United States alone appears to cast a shadow over the Shiite future, and so in the rhetoric imposed by the need for honor and supremacy, it is depicted as "arrogant" and the "oppressor." In strict defiance of reality, Ahmadinejad asserts, "Our enemies should know that they are unable to even slightly hurt our nation and they cannot create the tiniest obstacle on its glorious and progressive way." A Revolutionary Guards commander spells it out: "America should accept Iran as a great regional power and they should know that sanctions and military threats are not going to benefit them."

In that same rhetoric of honor, Ahmadinejad calls Israel "a disgraceful stain on the Islamic world" and "a rotten, dried tree that will be eliminated by one storm." In any case, Israel is doomed to be "wiped from the map" in "a war of destiny." While promoting a holocaust of its own, Tehran is currently hosting a conference to deny that Hitler's holocaust ever took place. I cannot prove it, but I suspect that the fury against Israel and Jews has no profound resonance with the population. Historically again, Persians and Jews were natural allies against Arabs. In the days of the shah, Iran and Israel had close commercial and military ties. Anti-Jewish

ROMAN GENN

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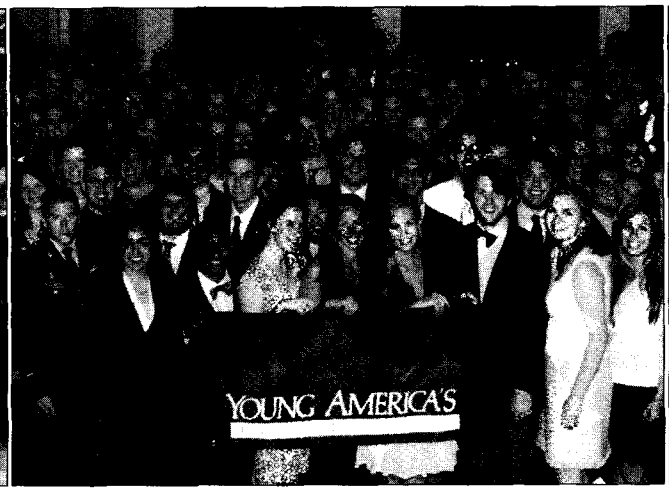

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stereotypes and images of "stain" and "rotten tree" are intended to induce the sense of shame needed to mobilize the faithful to redress it. An Iranian friend told me how on the day when Ahmadinejad promised to wipe Israel off the map, she was incessantly telephoned in Tehran by people saying that he had signed their death warrant, and some of them were in tears.

A nation whose way really is glorious and progressive has no need for a totalitarian security apparatus. The regime makes sure that nobody challenges it. The interior minister, Mustafa Pour-Mohammadi, is responsible for the summary execution of thousands of political prisoners. To give just two examples, Hojjat Zamani was executed on February 6 in Gohar Dasht Prison in the city of Karaj, near Tehran, and Valiollah Feyz Mahdavi is slated to be executed there in May. The charge against both of them was "enmity with God." I receive by e-mail regular lists of wretched men and women judicially murdered all over the country. Unforgettable among them is Ateqeh Rajabi, a 16-year-old orphan who went to work as a waitress to feed her siblings. Her efforts were called "acts incompatible with chastity." She was forbidden a lawyer, and her judge himself put the rope around her neck. A crackdown on universities is under way, involving purges of staff and students. In absolute control of the media, the regime uses sophisticated equipment to censor bloggers, arresting them by the score.

Western culture has no room in it for evidence of weakness disguised in this way by language as evidence of strength. In Western culture the literal meaning of words counts for more than the psychological vanities or evasions behind them. To us, lies may serve a purpose of glorification or mystification but they cannot be true. To us, expressions of hatred and the threat of extermination and war and the End of Days are indeed what they sound like, to be taken at face value and not as expediencies designed to avert shame and reclaim honor. Again I cannot prove it, but I am confident that Ahmadinejad has no conception that what he believes to be making him a serious person in his culture makes him a dangerous nut in ours. And a danger is what he most certainly is, to us and to himself. **NR**

■ SOUTH ASIA

The War Atop the World

Murderous Maoists and a blundering king

SAM DEALEY

Kathmandu, Nepal

WHEN the Maoists first came to Padmaraj Kandel's village in central Nepal seven years ago, they were greeted with hope. The young rebels were clean-cut and conscientious. Keen listeners who visited every house, they seemed to understand the people's frustrations—no development, onerous taxation, an imperious central government. Most important, they promised to help. "My villagers liked them," says Kandel, the former mayor. "The people were very happy."

But then, he says, "the Maoists began making mistakes." In 2001 they beheaded a police officer, and soon thereafter they bombed the local police station. Nine officers were killed and the rest fled. The Maoists, once viewed as peaceful cohabiters, seized control.

The villagers weren't sure what to make of the sudden violence—most rural Nepalese take a dim view of the exploitative police—but they learned soon enough. First the Maoists demanded food and "donations." Nobody refused. Then the village teenagers were compelled to attend training and education at the Maoist camp. "Nobody joined them freely," says Kandel. "Nobody liked them, but . . ." He points a finger to his head like a gun.

Among the first to be killed in Kandel's village was the schoolteacher. The Maoists often came to the school to lecture students, but soon they wanted to control the curriculum. The teacher resisted, and the exchanges became increasingly bitter. Finally, the teacher was marched from the classroom, denounced as a traitor to the Nepalese people, and shot. Kandel pulls a grubby photograph from a worn envelope. The teacher's hands are bound behind a tree, a rope is slung around his neck, and a tidy, dark hole stains his right temple. "All the people were made to come and see and were afraid," remembers Kandel. A poet, another teacher, a landowner—in all, some 27 men would be killed.

Kandel feared he would be next. His weekly meetings with the Maoists were becoming less friendly, and their entreaties to join them more forceful. He gathered his wife and family and fled. One week later, the rebels kidnapped his brother. They bridged his legs over two stones and shattered his kneecaps with a third. (He lived another year before succumbing to gangrene.)

Kandel is not sure he will ever return to his village. "Outside of Kathmandu, the Maoists are free!" he shouts helplessly. "They walk in the streets with guns and nobody asks them what they're doing!"

In the ten years since Nepal's Maoists launched their "people's war," nearly 13,000 have been killed and countless more displaced. Across the broad valley that spills from the Himalayan heights, misery reins. The Maoists move freely in the country's 75 districts, and the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) controls only token barracks and outposts beyond the capital. Schools are shuttered, the poor have gotten even poorer, and atrocities are commonplace.

But it's not just the Maoists who are making life worse. In the 14 months since King Gyanendra banished parliament and seized absolute power, the ruling monarchy claims to have inflicted a heavy toll on the insurrection. The largest casualty, however, seems to have been human and civil rights—and the palace itself. Activists and leaders of democratic parties are routinely arrested, the activities of journalists and NGOs are curbed, and countless peasants are punished for suspected Maoist collusion. Far from having a democratic restoration, the world's only Hindu kingdom plunges further into autocracy.

Democracy did not come easily to

Mr. Dealey is a writer based in Washington, D.C.

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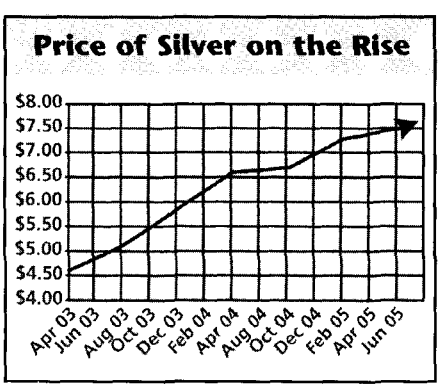

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Nepal, and when it finally did come in 1990 there was little to show for it. Rather than tackling the dull task of just governance, the young parties quickly adapted to the worst traditions of Nepal's ruling elite, concerning themselves primarily with petty intrigues and lining their pockets. As before, Kathmandu functioned as if it alone were Nepal. So when the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) quit parliament in 1996 and turned to armed struggle, attacking government and commercial institutions in six far-flung districts, few among the elite paid notice.

While the king and the parties dithered, the Maoists seized ground. By the time the royal army was deployed in 2001, some 60 of Nepal's 75 districts were under the Maoist leader Prachanda's power. "To tell you frankly," says a senior RNA officer, "the government was there, but it was not focused. It was an amalgamation of interests and up to the neck in corruption. Whole districts were falling into Maoist hands, and the government was doing nothing."

No one accuses the government of doing nothing now. Trouble is, it's doing the wrong things. After the palace massacre of 2001—in which the drug- and booze-addled crown prince killed his father and eight relatives before turning the gun on himself—the newly crowned Gyanendra vowed to crush the Maoists. But Gyanendra has difficulty seeing where the Maoist insurrection ends and the lives of ordinary Nepalese begin. He has struck out wildly at enemies both real and imagined, and his open antagonism toward the political parties, however infantile and irresponsible they may be, casts doubt on his commitment to democracy. "No one's put the monarchy in greater danger than the king himself," warns John Norris of the International Crisis Group. "The palace has cracked down on people who didn't have anything to do with the insurgency, and the king continues to make himself the focal point not only for the Maoists but for the parties."

The palace, for its part, recognizes that its royal army alone won't win. "There is no military solution to this problem," says Gen. R. G. Katawal, the army's chief of staff. "Our aim is to weaken the Maoists so they come to the negotiating table. They will have to renounce violence, and they won't do that until they feel weak enough." The question is when the weakened palace will realize it cannot restore a constitutional monarchy without the support of its subjects.

Perhaps undeservedly, Nepal's democratic parties still command respect among the Nepalese and abroad. Despite a boycott by the seven major parties and Maoist death threats against candidates,

The face of Nepal

Gyanendra stubbornly forged ahead with municipal elections in February. The king's loyalists won virtually every seat but gained little legitimacy. Meanwhile, increasingly violent crackdowns on pro-democracy protests have only deepened Gyanendra's isolation and made it impossible for the West to contribute much-needed military and political support. Most worrisome, the king's failure to establish common ground with the parties has driven them into the Maoists' arms.

After reconciliation efforts with the king failed last November, the parties pressed the only other lever at their disposal: a proposed alliance with the Maoists, who they hope will lay down their arms and submit to elections. Despite encouraging words from Prachanda, there's little to suggest that the Maoist leader is the dealing type. Peace negotiations broke down twice after he violated ceasefire agreements, and senior cadres who favor "democratic struggle" over "armed struggle" have been purged. In their effort to upstage the palace, the fractured political parties risk giving more than they get—first by bestowing an undeserved legitimacy on the Maoists, then by negotiating away the farm. Even if Prachanda were to submit to elections, it's doubtful he would quietly fade away should his Maoists lose at the polls.

Until the king and the parties reconcile, stories like that of Kandel—the former village mayor—will grow more commonplace among Nepal's poor and oppressed. From a battered desk in a small, dark room on the fifth floor of a rundown building in central Kathmandu, Kandel now administers the Association of the Sufferers from the Maoist Nepal (ASMAN), a shoestring network that helps the capital's swelling refugee community. Tattered pictures of men and women killed by the Maoists cover the walls—in some, the victims look beatific, their bodies wrapped in garlands and brightly colored sheets for Hindu cremation; in others, they lie in the disjointed final agony of death, their eyes and wounds wide open.

Among those who escaped ASMAN's office walls is Bedprasad Regmi, whose small village in the Rupandehi district was a casualty of the revolution. Two years ago, the Maoists came to his shop and demanded a "donation." When Regmi refused, they dragged him to their camp, beat him, and splintered his leg with the blunt side of an axe. He moved with his family to Kathmandu, but will never walk again. He has no money, no hope for money, and yet needs more surgeries. "Nobody likes the Maoists," Regmi says. "They hurt so many people. They closed the school and took young men and women from the village. The young people did not want to go, but if they did not they were shot." Janardan Ghimire, from a nearby village, nods in agreement. His father was shot for refusing the rebels' demands.

Kandel's wants are simple. "I want to go back to my house," he says. "I want to live in peace in my village. And I want democracy." The last is a hope he's fanned for 16 years, but disillusionment threatens. He fingers the picture of the teacher's bound and slumped body and tapes it to his wall. "Politics!" he sighs. **NR**

ROMAN GENN

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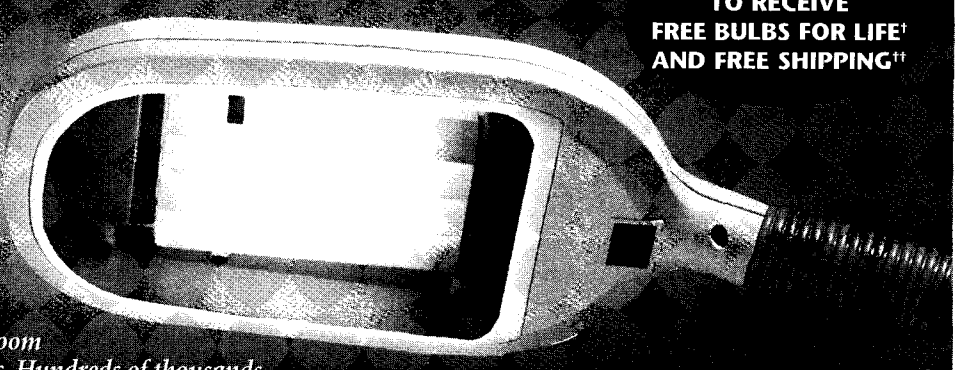

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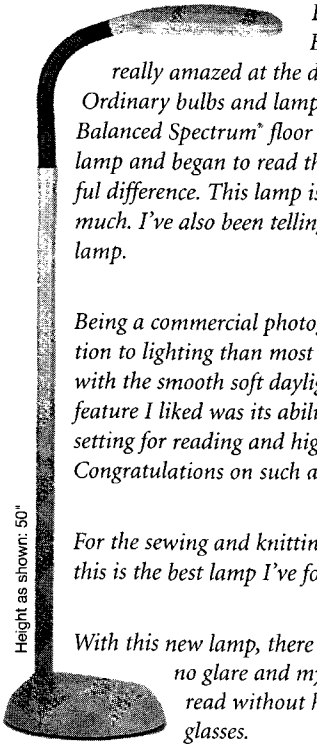

I had recently ordered and received a Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp. I am really amazed at the difference it makes in lighting. Ordinary bulbs and lamps pale in comparison to the Balanced Spectrum® floor lamp. As soon as I turned on the lamp and began to read the newspaper I could see the wonderful difference. This lamp is just what I needed. Thanks you so much. I've also been telling a lot of my friends about this lamp.

Donna E.

Being a commercial photographer, I probably give more attention to lighting than most people and therefore was impressed with the smooth soft daylight quality of your lamp. Another feature I liked was its ability for dual intensity, good at the low setting for reading and high intensity as a detail work light. Congratulations on such a practical and attractive product.

Dennis M.

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Kari K.

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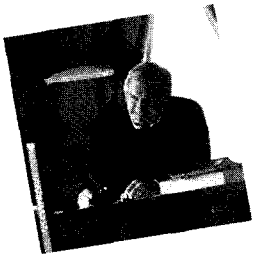

I am a happy camper. Once again I can decipher those pesky little numbers on a crossword puzzle. No more filling in 35 Across when it should have been 38 Across. Can you imagine the frustration avoided. Moreover, I can enjoy again a paperback with small print. My reading options have increased.

Jack W.

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■ EUROPE

France's Rougher, Tougher Future

Not to mention ours

ROB LONG

A FEW years ago, standing in line at a post office in Paris, I made the mistake of glancing briefly at my shoes. In the eye-blink's moment that my attention was diverted, two things happened: One, the person directly in front of me moved forward about 22 inches; and two, the old crone behind me jabbed a bony finger between my shoulder blades, gestured with outraged theatricality at the 22 inches of (now) empty space between me and the person ahead of me, and cried out in exasperated impatience, "Monsieur!"

Because, of course, there were 22 inches of unoccupied space in front of me that I should have been occupying, and the 22 inches of space that I *was* occupying rightfully belonged to her.

"Madame," I said, in my very best French, "there are many wonderful things about your great country—a reverential passion for fine food and drink, a comprehensive and unapologetically rigorous system of education, flamboyant neckwear, promiscuous women, a joyful tolerance of artists and eccentrics—but your creepy fetish for bureaucracy and your petty, inflexible, pointlessly competitive pushiness will drag this prideful country down, deeper than it is now, deep into decrepitude, as you bicker and fuss at each other over this or that new tax surcharge or some complicated government employment scheme or something as irrelevant and meaningless as the tiny bit of dirty tile that I'm standing on, and that you covet with such impotent fury."

I mean, that's what I *would* have said, if I could properly conjugate the future imperfect (or whatever) of the phrase "fall into decrepitude." No, what I did was mutter "*Désolé, madame*" and shuffle forward, feeling her triumphant, beady eyes burning a hole into my back until I was called to the window to present my package for mailing, only to be told that it had been improperly wrapped (no string; too much tape) and that, in any case, this post office did not accept packages of those dimensions, and also, there was a form to fill out.

The future imperfect (or whatever) is pretty much the only tense that applies to the France of today, which when not gripped by rioting young Muslims is paralyzed by marching young students. If either of these groups gets its way, the future will be tense all right, and imperfect. (And if the radical Muslims succeed, it'll be conditional, too.)

But the French are prepared, at least rhetorically, for this kind of breakdown. This is the, what, fifth republic? There's a part of every Frenchman that adores the philosophical drama of a good, solid national crackup. For one thing, it really gives the language a workout. The reason French is often described as the language of diplomacy isn't just that it's flowery and foggy and vague. It's also the language of wonderfully pompous concern.

Surfing the satellite dish for French news broadcasts has been especially rewarding these past few weeks—lots of roundtable talk shows with the usual suspects rounded up (a couple of politicians in suits, a philosopher in stubble, a sad-eyed young girl, you get the picture)—and though they mostly spoke too quickly for me to get the details, I got the basic thrust: France, she is in a *crise d'identité*; France, she has a *destin inconnu*; France, her youth *s'inquiètent* about *la globalisation*. There's no real crosstalk on these shows. The host just poses a question with a downcast smirk, and each guest holds forth for five or ten minutes in an unbroken river of magnificent French abstraction.

In France, riots and demonstrations and strikes are a kind of community theater, a national kabuki: It goes strikes, riots, cars on fire, dramatic hand-wringing headlines in *Le Monde*, 15-minute monologues on TF1, shots of the president shrugging grimly, back to normal. *C'est la danse, non?*

Trouble is, there's an old lady in the post office who really wants to push ahead a few utterly non-abstract inches. And those kids rioting—the regular old French ones, not the Muslims from the ghettos—they're not so different. It may seem odd to Americans that the French are arguing over an employment contract that prohibits first-time job-holders from being fired within a two-year window, but in the context of a coddling, protective state, the demand for absolute job security is not so crazy. When President Jacques Chirac offered a toothless compromise, the result was more rioting, more strikes. The unemployment rate among young people is somewhere in the double digits—higher, naturally, than the rate for the older slice of the population.

What the young rioters correctly anticipate is something that a series of French governments—and, in fact, most of French society—has been unwilling to admit: The future is going to be rougher and tougher and meaner than the past. The promises of a managed, stately, dirigiste economy are going to be broken—wait, *have already been broken*. It's not just the future that's imperfect. The present ain't so hot neither.

None of this was supposed to happen. What was supposed to happen, and what the French have been promising themselves since, oh, maybe one or two republics ago, was that a combination of French cleverness and German muscle—a combination that has seen many iterations, some peaceful, some not so—would create a unified, economically dynamic European continent that would be managed and pruned by judicious (French) bureaucrats to maximize both prosperity and social cohesion. To convince a skeptical population to accept this odd new arrangement, join the global marketplace, and give up their pretty folding money, they offered lots of goodies—vacations, generous employment contracts, a highly civilized and expanding pension system—all in a successful effort to convince people of a counterintuitive theory that says, When more people run a race, it doesn't create more losers; it creates more winners. Call it the Special Olympics Economy.

Punching above your weight in the world economy means that occasionally

Mr. Long is an NR contributing editor and author of the magazine's "Long View." His most recent book is *Set Up, Joke, Set Up, Joke.*

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the world economy punches back. Currency unification means rigorous budgetary restraint, a slimming-down of the public sector, a recognition that some people are going to be left behind, and the realization that global competition doesn't mean just selling goods and services, it means selling yourself as a great place to do business, as a lucrative place to invest capital. Who will want to open a factory—hell, even an *office*—in a country that requires a solid two-year employment commitment to the youngest employees? Who will want to invest capital in a country with tax rates onerous enough to maintain a double-soft duvet of a social-welfare network? None of this was supposed to happen in France.

What happened, as we now know, is a weird grab-bag of protectionism, freely moving capital, immigration problems, budget deficits, nationalistic tendencies, and rampant global competition. What happened is an economy increasingly slippery and untamable. What happened—in an ironic twist of events that could probably be best described in French—is that in an attempt to be as different from the United States as possible, they moved closer to our ad hoc system of chaotic nonmanagement. The only thing they have left is a clutch of now ridiculously rosy-sounding promises that simply cannot be kept. And the young people in the streets know it. But they were promised their 22 inches and they're not going to stop until they get their 22 inches. That's the real trouble with the Special Olympics Economy: We're all winners or we're all losers, but nobody stands out.

When the Internet was still a wholly owned subsidiary of the American defense community, the French introduced something called the Minitel—a weird phone-looking keypad for transmitting and receiving data. Like Charles de Gaulle Airport and the Pompidou Center, the Minitel looked new and fresh and cutting-edge for about six seconds, but now they all just look silly and dated.

And it's fun, too, to joke about the French and roll our eyes at their pompous lack of self-awareness. But the French tend to get places first. So let's permit ourselves a few juicy giggles, some finger pointing, and an eye-roll or two, and then try to figure out what 22 inches *we're* fighting about—how we're going to pay for all of those free prescription drugs we're buying for senior citizens, or whether anyone under 35 is going to see anything from his FICA contributions, or whether our preening moral vanity when it comes to racial or sexual set-asides is going to help us compete in a global economy, or whether fat people should be allowed to sue McDonald's, or whether children raised to think they're wonderful, special, creative beings are really going to be happy taking orders from a guy named Lakshmi, or Sindar, or Kwan, or Chin, or, especially, whether Lakshmi or Sindar or Kwan or Chin is even going to want to hire Britney or Tyler or Madison or Quentin.

There's a familiar, though inexact, echo in the troubles of France today. Once we're finished laughing, it'll be time to get on with our own future imperfect. **NR**

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Winning, and Losing, on Abortion

How go the wars?

RAMESH PONNURU

PRESIDENT BUSH has done almost nothing for the NRA. He hasn't had to. Partly that's because a Republican Congress has kept anti-gun legislation from reaching his desk. The ban on assault weapons expired without any congressional action to renew it. But even more, it's because Democrats no longer fight for gun control. Many Democrats blamed their loss of Congress in 1994 on the assault-weapons ban, which had been enacted that year. Even more Democrats concluded that guns had lost them the 2000 election: If Al Gore had won Tennessee, Arkansas, or West Virginia, all relatively pro-gun states, he would have been president.

Gun control was one of three issues that were widely expected to bring about a Democratic majority in the 1990s. Gun control, education, and abortion were chipping away at Republican strength in the suburbs, especially in the inner ring of suburbs and among women. But the Democrats abandoned gun control after 2000. Democrats lost their huge advantage on education between 1999 and 2002, when George W. Bush changed the topic of debate from the abolition of the Department of Education to the No Child Left Behind Act.

Now it is becoming increasingly difficult for Democrats to deny that their support for "abortion rights" is hurting them, not helping them. They are trying to devise strategies to limit the damage.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Democrats—and not a few Republicans—were convinced that being pro-abortion was a winning position. In the twenty years following *Roe* v. *Wade*, the abortion rate and public support for abortion had crept steadily up. When the Supreme Court threatened to overturn *Roe* in 1989, many pro-life politicians decided to appease pro-choice voters by flipping on the issue. The 1992 Republican convention was widely regarded as a disaster in which the party's social conservatives had turned off swing voters. And the public elected Bill Clinton, the most pro-abortion president since *Roe* came down. On his first day in office, he issued a series of executive orders liberalizing abortion law.

Since most of the leaders of the House and Senate favored abortion rights, pro-choice activists had high hopes of enacting the Freedom of Choice Act, legislation that mirrored *Roe* by preventing states from prohibiting abortion, even late in pregnancy. By the end of 1993, Clinton would propose a health-care plan featuring subsidized abortion. "The great abortion debate is over," wrote columnist Charles Krauthammer: The pro-lifers had lost.

But pro-choice dreams quickly turned to ashes. Congress never even voted on the Freedom of Choice Act or the Clinton health plan. Democrats lost control of Congress in 1994, a year in which not a single pro-life incumbent lost to a pro-choice challenger. The new Republican leaders of Congress were pro-life. Suddenly, the abortion lobby found itself having to fight legal restrictions rather than fighting for government subsidies. The abortion rate peaked in 1990 (at 1.6 million), and public support for abortion peaked soon thereafter.

In retrospect, it is easy to see that even at its height the pro-choice movement had major weaknesses, some of them hidden, most of them growing. Abortion had never been normalized in the culture. The public refused to see it as just another medical procedure. The reluctance of most doctors to perform it was a constant source of consternation to pro-choicers, who naturally blamed that reluctance on intimidation by violent pro-lifers. (What other reason could there be not to do abortions?) Characters on television shows, no matter how much bed-hopping they do, rarely have abortions. In 2005, one pro-choice writer noted, with disgust, that on soap operas more characters had come back from the dead in one season than had gotten abortions in the history of the genre.

By the '90s, medical developments were starting to weaken further the hold of abortion on the culture. In the early years of the debate it was common for advocates of legal abortion to dismiss the human fetus as a mere "blob of tissue" or as "protoplasm." But as more and more people looked at ultrasound images of their children, nephews and nieces, or grandkids in the womb, they could see even early in pregnancy that those descriptions were grossly inadequate. The date of viability kept (and keeps) moving back, too.

The polls had always registered ambivalence about abortion. If asked whether abortion should be "between a woman and her doctor," a majority would say yes. But if given three options on abortion policy—legal under all circumstances, legal only in the cases of rape, incest, or threats to the mother's life, and illegal under all circumstances—a majority would also choose the two restrictive policies. Large majorities of the public favored mandatory waiting periods, parental-consent laws, spousal-notification requirements, and prohibitions on abortion after the first three months of pregnancy.

Mr. Ponnuru is the author of *Party of Death: The Democrats, the Media, the Courts, and the Disregard for Human Life* (Regnery), from which this article is adapted.

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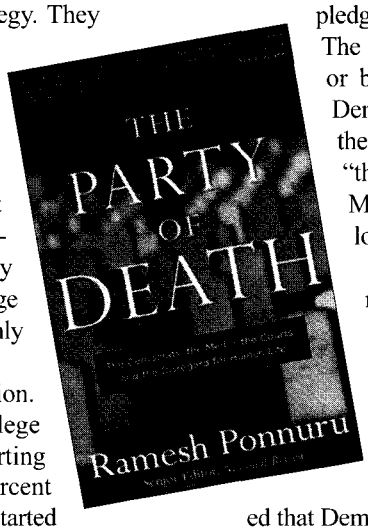
And the people who were most inclined to vote for or against candidates based on their positions on abortion were pro-life. Even in the midst of the drubbing the first George Bush received in 1992, exit polls showed him beating Clinton 55 to 36 percent among voters who said that abortion was one of their top issues. That greater pro-life intensity was present even in relatively pro-choice states.

So even at the high tide of the pro-choice movement, Clinton found it politic to say that he wanted abortion to be "safe, legal, and rare."

A STRATEGY FOR LIFE

Besides the increased use of ultrasound, the most devastating development for pro-choicers in the 1990s was a shift in pro-life strategy. For years, it had been easy for pro-choicers to put the spotlight on the issues that divided pro-lifers from the public. Most pro-life activists wanted to ban abortion even in the cases of rape and incest; the public strongly disagreed. Most pro-lifers wanted to amend the Constitution to ban abortion; the public saw that as a radical step.

In 1995, however, pro-lifers gave up on the all-or-nothing approach and adopted an incrementalist strategy. They began to campaign for a ban on partial-birth abortion. Now *pro-choice* extremism was at the center of the debate. And if being pro-choice meant approving of partial-birth abortion, a lot of voters were not willing to take the label. In September 1995, Gallup found that 56 percent of the public thought of itself as pro-choice and 33 percent identified as pro-life. By August 1997, however, the pro-choice advantage on that measure had shrunk from 23 points to only three (47–44). It then stayed in single digits.



Young people started to turn against abortion. UCLA's nationwide survey of incoming college freshmen showed 67 percent of them supporting legal abortion in 1992. By 2004, only 54 percent did—the lowest number since the survey had started asking the question in 1977.

In 2005, the women's magazine *Glamour* ran a story on the "mysterious disappearance of young pro-choice women." It noted that a 2003 CBS/*New York Times* poll had found that 35 percent of young women (aged 18–29) thought that "abortion should be available to anyone who wants it." Fifty percent of the young women of 1993 had thought that. It quoted Alexander Sanger of Planned Parenthood: "I've seen the numbers and I find them unbelievably shocking. Isn't it obvious that young women have to be at the forefront of fighting for their reproductive rights because they're the ones who need them?" It isn't obvious to many young women.

Republicans had been divided on abortion. But almost all of them were willing to oppose partial-birth abortion, and they were not nervous about doing so. The campaign weakened pro-choice Republicans by dividing *them*. The pro-choice ultras, like New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman, who refused to oppose partial-birth abortion, found themselves marginalized.

The incremental strategy also appeared to reduce the abortion rate. Economist Michael New, in a series of papers, has found evidence that informed-consent laws, parental-consent laws, and restrictions on abortion funding brought down the number of abortions.

By the time John Kerry ran for president in 2004, the savviest Democratic strategists knew they had a problem. Kerry's first statement in the Senate had been a defense of abortion, and he went on to compile a consistently pro-choice voting record. It was a record he had to downplay as he tried to court the blue-collar, socially conservative swing voters of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

While campaigning in the Midwest, Kerry explained that he was "very serious about my faith," believed that life began at conception, and personally opposed abortion. "But I can't take my Catholic view and legislate it on a Protestant or Hindu." His comments distressed some of his pro-abortion supporters, and led others to question his consistency. He tried to clarify his views in an interview with Peter Jennings. It was his "personal belief" that fertilization formed a "human being": "That's when life begins." But "that's not a person yet." In order to defend his position, Kerry had taken up residence in Peter Singer land, where the concept of a "human non-person" makes sense.

Neither Kerry nor his running mate John Edwards pledged to defend abortion rights in his convention speech. The presidential nominee, the vice-presidential nominee, or both had made that pledge at the three previous Democratic conventions. Kerry not only refused to utter the word "abortion"; he did not even use the euphemism "the right to choose." His campaign disinvited Kate Michelman, the longtime head of the major abortion lobby, NARAL, from a rally.

After the election—which saw not only Bush's reelection but pro-life gains in the Senate—Democrats started to go public with their doubts about the party's abortion strategy. Democratic pollster Stanley Greenberg pointed out that abortion was one reason that the Catholic vote had gone Republican for the first time since 1988. Another postmortem, by William Galston and Elaine Kamarck, concluded that Democrats should "continue to support the core of *Roe* v. *Wade* while dropping their intransigence on questions such as parental notification and partial-birth abortion." Strategist Donna Brazile confessed to the *New York Times*: "Even I have trouble explaining to my family that we are not about killing babies."

Emily's List, a pro-abortion activist group, put out its own analysis, arguing that the "pro-choice majority" still existed. But Kerry himself, when the president of that group asked him about the party's future, had a different analysis. The party came across as though it liked abortion and needed to run more pro-life candidates, he said—to gasps from the liberal crowd.

Since then, Democrats have adopted three basic strategies for dealing with their abortion liabilities. The first is to follow Kerry's advice by running pro-life Democratic candidates and elevating pro-life Democratic officeholders. Right after the 2004 elections, the Senate Democrats made Harry Reid, a moderate pro-lifer, their leader. Sen. Charles Schumer of New York, who runs the Democrats' Senate campaign, courted pro-lifer Robert Casey Jr. to run against Rick Santorum in Pennsylvania.

It was a smart move, and it testifies to the pro-choicers' political bind. This is shaping up to be a pretty good year for Democrats. But

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their top opportunity to pick up a Senate seat is in Pennsylvania, and it's their top opportunity only because the abortion lobby has been sidelined. The question now is whether pro-choice Democrats will vote for Casey when they learn his position. Howard Dean, the party chairman, has argued that they should because Casey would be less likely than Santorum to vote for "extremist" judges: in other words, for justices who might vote to overturn *Roe*.

This strategy—a partial surrender—has real limits. When Reid and Nancy Pelosi tried to install a pro-lifer as party chairman, they were quickly rebuffed. The job went to Dean, who opposes even parental-notification laws.

The second strategy, that of Dean himself, is to give the party a rhetorical makeover. "We're not the party of abortion," he told Tim Russert a month after the 2004 elections. A few months later, he was back on Russert's show, trying to reframe the debate: "I don't know anybody who thinks abortion is a good thing. I don't know anybody in either party who is pro-abortion. The issue is not whether we think abortion is a good thing. The issue is whether a woman has a right to make up her own mind about her health care."

In a later appearance by Dean on *Hardball*, Chris Matthews asked him six times whether the party was "pro-choice" and supported "abortion rights." Each time, Dean refused to adopt either phrase, instead saying variants of "the government should stay out of the personal lives of families and women." These are rather clumsy rhetorical pirouettes. For a generation, Democratic politicians have been saying that they are "personally opposed" to abortion. Dean is just doing the same old thing, although he always gives the impression that he thinks he has just invented the wheel when he does it.

The third strategy is to try to win over what Third Way, a "progressive group," calls the "abortion grays": people who are ambivalent about abortion. Sen. Hillary Clinton has followed this strategy. She has gotten great press for allegedly seeking "common ground" with pro-lifers. In a January 2005 speech, just after *Roe*'s anniversary, she claimed to "respect" pro-lifers. She said that both pro-lifers and pro-choicers favor reducing the number of abortions. ("Abortion in many ways represents a sad, even tragic choice to many, many women.") She said that they should therefore join forces to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies by promoting contraception.

THE MASK OF DEATH

Amid the media's paeans to Clinton's alleged centrism, political brilliance, and willingness to seek compromise, it seems to have escaped almost everyone's attention that her speech began by implicitly comparing pro-lifers to the brutal Communist dictators of Romania and China. The alternative to unrestricted abortion, on her telling, was forced monthly gynecological exams by the government for all women of child-bearing age. The introduction to the speech could have been lifted from *The Handmaid's Tale*.

It's also not clear why this speech was so widely taken to have broken new ground. It is certainly politically shrewder for Clinton to call abortion a tragedy than it would be for her to celebrate it as liberation. "Safe, legal, and rare" was a shrewd slogan by her husband, too. But it didn't stop pro-choicers from losing ground during his presidency. Senator Clinton herself gave essentially the same speech back when she was First Lady, in 1999.

Clinton's position is that abortion is such a terrible, terrible tragedy, it has to be defended against any legal restrictions and, indeed, subsidized. When she ran for the Senate in 2000, she attacked her Republican opponent, moderate pro-choicer Rick Lazio, for favoring parental notification, opposing partial-birth abortion, and being willing to vote for judges who oppose *Roe*. As a senator, she has co-sponsored Barbara Boxer's version of the Freedom of Choice Act, which nullifies states' informed-consent laws and restrictions on taxpayer funding for abortion.

Clinton's strategy will backfire to the extent that it raises the question: What's so tragic about abortion anyway? It can't be just that many women feel bad after having abortions, which is the closest she has come to an explanation. If that were the only problem, the solution would be to counsel the women and to do what could be done to change the culture so that people regarded abortion the way they do appendectomies. Abortion is regrettable, and needs to be minimized, for the same reason that abortion is wrong and unjust: because it kills an innocent human being. That is also the reason it should be prohibited.

There is a cord that binds premise and conclusion, that moves from recognition of the wrongness of abortion to recognition of its injustice to support for laws against it; and this fact has real political implications. Clinton wants to cast pro-lifers as rigid ideologues who want to throw people in jail but won't take practical steps to reduce abortion, such as increasing access to contraception. Harry Reid's Prevention First Act, which also promotes contraception, is similarly designed to wrong-foot pro-lifers by dividing them.

But these bluffs can be easily called. If Clinton wants to find common ground to reduce abortion, why won't she endorse modest regulations that the vast majority of Americans support and that appear to have reduced abortion rates? If pro-lifers offer a few amendments to Reid's bill, they can expose Clinton's pose of besieged reasonableness for what it is. And throwing people in jail need not be central to the pro-life agenda. Some pro-lifers would be perfectly happy to see a legal regime that consisted of removing the medical licenses of doctors who perform proscribed abortions and levying steep fines on anyone who performs one without a license. Many pro-lifers want to go further, of course. But the point is that Clinton wouldn't go anywhere near this far. Her real objection to pro-life policies is not that they would throw people in jail.

It would be a mistake for pro-lifers to turn triumphalist. They can't be said to be "winning" when abortion remains legal at any stage of pregnancy throughout the country, and is performed 1.3 million times a year. Pro-choice candidates can certainly win elections. Nancy Pelosi could be Speaker of the House next year, and Hillary Clinton could win the presidency in 2008. Pro-lifers could make strategic mistakes that help the pro-choice side. South Dakota has enacted a ban on abortions even in the case of rape and incest, even though *Roe* is still on the books. It is a foolish repudiation of a successful incrementalist strategy.

Absent such gratuitous mistakes, however, pro-choicers will remain on the defensive for some time to come. The conventional wisdom of fifteen years ago—that opposition to abortion was an albatross for Republicans—has been thoroughly upended.

In the days after Terri Schiavo died, one Democratic operative warned, "We can't just be the party of death." That's right. But it is not a fate from which the Democrats seem prepared to deliver themselves. **NR**

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■ POLITICS

Saint Sam

Senator Brownback of Kansas is one of the country's leading virtuecrats

JOHN J. MILLER

ABOUT five years ago, at a weekly prayer meeting of senators, Sam Brownback came as close as he ever had to confessing to a hate crime. "I was scheduled to be the speaker that morning," recalls Brownback, a Kansas Republican. "As I was preparing for it, I had seen hate in myself for the Clintons. I felt righteous. That's not a Christian virtue."

Brownback says his antipathy for the Clintons grew out of the government shutdowns of the mid-1990s, when he was a freshman member of the House. "We were trying to balance the budget, and President Clinton backed away from an agreement," he says. "I flew off the handle." More controversies followed, including impeachment. As a senator in 1999, Brownback voted to remove Clinton from office. He says he isn't sorry for that, but he does regret the way he felt about it at the time: "When somebody does something wrong, there is a penalty to pay, but there is not an entitlement to hate."

Within a couple of years, of course, one Clinton was out of office and another was in—Hillary Rodham Clinton became one of Brownback's Senate colleagues in 2001. She also started to attend the Tuesday-morning prayer group. Brownback figured that she would be there on the day he was supposed to speak, and indeed she was. He used the occasion to clear his mind. "I confessed it to the group," says Brownback. "I apologized for my hate."

Today, Brownback is all about the love—not just for the Clintons, but for everyone. As he mulls a long-shot bid for the White House in 2008, he is trying to reinvent the politics of compassionate conservatism for the post-Bush era. "The term 'compassionate conservatism' is great, but it's basically a marketing term," he says. "I think it's been overused in rhetoric and underutilized in public policy. I want to make it a reality." His idea is to place love and compassion for human life at the center of everything, from the traditional issues of abortion, cloning, and euthanasia to the less traditional ones of immigration, pharmaceutical patents, and North Korea. The senator's vision is certainly distinctive, and it has already demonstrated crossover appeal by resonating with some liberals. Will it appeal to conservatives in a primary campaign two years from now?

NICE GUYS FINISH . . . FIRST?

The 49-year-old Brownback is the epitome of soft-spoken niceness. In speeches, he rarely raises his voice, even when he means to show passion. In Q&A sessions, he is flawlessly polite, often thanking his questioners for their thoughtfulness (even when they aren't very thoughtful). He smiles easily, though smiling also has the effect of narrowing his dark eyes to slits—it looks as if he's squinting, almost as if he is enduring some kind of pain. Brownback is no joker, but he does show flashes of humor. At one recent event, a man asked him a potentially confrontational question about gay marriage. Naturally, the senator thanked him—"for not talking about 'Brownback's Mountain.'" Then he stated his opposition to gay marriage. "I don't say that with malice toward anybody," he concluded. It is difficult to imagine the guy hating anyone.

Even so, he is capable of playing hardball politics. Last October, Brownback helped derail the Supreme Court nomination of Harriet Miers, whose potential ascension was viewed by many conservatives as a disaster in the making. After meeting with Miers privately, the senator told the press that he would consider voting against her, even if President Bush personally urged him to do otherwise. He nows says, "When I first heard her name, I wondered, 'Who is this person? Where did she come from?' I thought there were good nominees out there and she was not one of them." Brownback never denounced the nomination, but his vocal skepticism gave cover to those who did. Miers had the support of many Evangelicals who also look to Brownback for political leadership; it is possible to think that in the absence of the senator's public doubts, which hardly any other senators were willing to express, the resolution to the Miers controversy could have been less pleasing to conservatives.

Brownback came to Washington as part of the GOP class of 1994, joining calls to downsize the federal government. But he didn't stay in the House for long. In 1996, Bob Dole abruptly resigned his seat in the Senate so that he could concentrate on running for president. Lt. Gov. Sheila Frahm, a pro-choice Republican in the mold of Nancy Kassebaum, was appointed to replace him. Brownback decided to challenge Frahm, even though she was the de facto incumbent and a member of his own party. He made cutting government a theme of his campaign; Frahm assailed his "slash and burn" positions on the budget. Brownback prevailed in an August primary and in the general election. Since then, he has won reelection twice, most recently in 2004, by wide margins.

Moving from the House to the Senate was obviously a big step, but it wasn't the most important thing that happened to Brownback in the mid-1990s. A year into his congressional service, he had a cancer scare—a doctor found melanoma on his side, and for a while the prognosis was uncertain. "It caused me to do a mental reevaluation," he says. He didn't change his policy views, but he did rethink his political purpose. One night when he couldn't sleep, he got up, found a copy of his résumé, and looked it over. "I had devoted my life to building that résumé," he says. "But what did it really matter? Life is not a résumé." He tossed it into the fireplace and watched it burn. "Doing that made me a lot less fearful of what others will think and [made it] easier to stand up for the right things, such as fighting for life or for malaria relief in Africa." He beat the cancer, but he says he emerged from the experience a changed man. Religious faith would come to play an ever greater role in his life.

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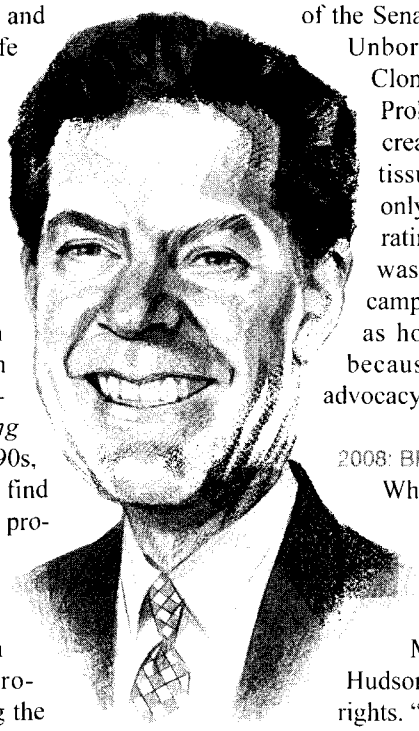
FAITH-BASED INITIATIVE

In 2002, he converted to Catholicism. "I've not talked much about it publicly," he told me at our first interview, which happened to be on Ash Wednesday (there were ashes on his forehead). "It's just something I felt called to do. I love the liturgy and the writings of the saints. There's so much beauty there, and so much beauty of thought." Whatever the motivation, it was clearly an act of conscience, as Kansas is not a heavily Catholic state in which conversion might deliver a political benefit. Nor did Brownback's family convert with him; on most Sunday mornings, he attends an early Mass and then goes to a Protestant service with his wife and kids.

Another sign of his growing faith was his interest in William Wilberforce, a Tory politician who fought for the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. While many American conservatives identify Edmund Burke as their favorite parliamentarian of yore, Evangelicals are more likely to look to Wilberforce, who was about a generation younger than Burke. (Next year, Walden Media, the company behind the recent *Chronicles of Narnia* film, will release *Amazing Grace*, a movie about Wilberforce.) In the 1990s, Brownback began to read everything he could find on Wilberforce, who used his public office to promote Christian morals. For Brownback, the attraction to Wilberforce and abolitionism was only natural: The senator grew up near Osawatomie, Kan., the town from which John Brown launched murderous attacks on pro-slavery men a century and a half ago, earning the pre–Harper's Ferry nickname "Osawatomie Brown." When Brownback learned that forms of slavery were still being practiced in Sudan and elsewhere, it outraged him. "I couldn't believe this was going on," he says. "It was just wrong, and we needed to do something about it."



Sen. Sam Brownback

Osawatomie Brownback became increasingly interested in human rights, not just in Africa but also in Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Pakistan, and Turkey—anywhere they were being violated. He also investigated the international sex trade, in which organized-crime syndicates are forcing an estimated 1 million women and girls around the world into prostitution. For Brownback and many others, the sex trade *is* a slave trade. "This mass trafficking of women and children is the largest manifestation of modern-day slavery worldwide," he has said. One of the most important mechanisms for fighting it has been the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, authored by Brownback and Paul Wellstone, the late Democrat of Minnesota. It is one of several legislative successes Brownback has achieved in behalf of human rights. For these efforts, and especially for the way he talks about them, *The Economist* recently labeled Brownback "the Wilberforce Republican."

He is perhaps more accurately described as a bleeding-heart conservative. For one thing, he really is a conservative—he supports a flat tax, criticizes divorce and illegitimacy, and backs an aggressive foreign policy in Iraq. What really animates him, however, is something deeper. In February, he delivered a major address at Kansas State University, as part of a lecture series named after Alf Landon, the Kansan who ran for president against FDR in 1936. "What are the battles today that we must wage?" he asked. "I believe that the core battle of our day is the battle to defend the inherent dignity of each and every person, the inherent beauty of each and every soul to be respected and treated as a beautiful, unique, and sacred child of a loving God."

It is not unusual for conservatives to speak this way as they go about promoting the culture of life, and Brownback is one of the Senate's pro-life leaders. He is the author of the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act, the Human Cloning Prohibition Act, and the Human Chimera Prohibition Act (which would make it a crime to create a being with both human and non-human tissues)—none of which has become law. The only time Brownback failed to earn a 100 percent rating from the National Right to Life Committee was when he supported the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance bill (which the NRLC regarded as hostile not because it favored abortion but because it placed new restrictions on political-advocacy groups).

2008: BROWNBACK TO THE FUTURE?

What distinguishes Brownback from other pro-lifers is his ambitiously expansive vision for the culture of life. "He's the one conservative who can bridge the gap between the blue states and the red states," says Michael Horowitz, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a Brownback ally on human rights. "When liberals hear him talk, they understand that the spirit that moves him to be pro-life is also the spirit that moves him to have sympathy for North Korean refugees." The speech at Kansas State, for instance, linked familiar life issues with the less familiar ones of alleviating poverty and reforming criminals in the United States as well as preventing disease and fighting genocide in Africa. Liberals sometimes complain that pro-life conservatives stop caring about children once they've left the womb; such claims usually turn into pitches for enlarging the welfare state. Brownback responds to their accusations without surrendering to their demands, quoting both Ronald Reagan and Bono in the process. As a result, he has managed to impress at least a few people who normally hold a dim view of conservatives. *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof has called Brownback "the most intriguing man in Washington—so wrong on so much, and yet such a leader on humanitarian issues." At a time of partisan rancor, the senator has managed to stick to his principles and still find some love on the left.

Will his bleeding-heart conservatism find it on the right, especially as he heads toward 2008? On the whole, Republican primary voters will like what they see in Brownback, whose lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union is 95 percent. Evangelicals in particular will welcome his idealistic politics: Conservative Christian groups are a rising presence in foreign affairs, as they combat religious persecution, defend

DARREN GYGI

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Israel, and engage in conventional relief efforts. Brownback has tried to find ways he can help from Washington, such as proposing that drug companies develop treatments for diseases that ravage poor countries in return for increasing their patent protection. Brownback speaks about certain international issues with as much authority as anybody in the Senate. Yet his specialization in the soft issues of human rights may also seem out of sync with the gritty requirements of the post-9/11 world. When Republicans nominate their next presidential candidate, they'll be less interested in a goodwill ambassador than in a national-security hawk.

Moreover, some of Brownback's pet projects will strike conservatives as bizarre, such as his determination to pass a resolution that apologizes to Indian tribes "for the poor and painful choices our government sometimes made to disregard its solemn word," as he put it in testimony to the Senate's Indian Affairs Committee last year. One of Brownback's main assets is that he lacks the jagged edges of some right-wing pols—but he may have smoothed away the sharpness so successfully that conservatives will harbor doubts about him.

Immigration may pose an especially thorny problem. In March, Brownback broke with most of his fellow Republicans on the Judiciary Committee to vote for the McCain-Kennedy immigration bill, which would put today's illegal aliens on a path to citizenship. The senator has likened his own position to Reagan's, though it is hard to believe that many conservatives view the 1986 immigration law (which granted amnesty to nearly 3 million illegal aliens) as a high point of Reagan's presidency. "I see tension in our party between showing compassion and enforcing our laws," says Brownback. "We also have to recognize that there is a lot of work where it's hard to find Americans who will do it, such as meatpacking, which is a physically demanding and dangerous job." He therefore believes a guest-worker program is necessary. His approval of the McCain-Kennedy bill in committee unleashed a torrent of conservative criticism: Mark Krikorian of the Center for Immigration Studies, a restrictionist group, dubbed him "Amnesty Sam," and Human Events Online, the website of the weekly newspaper, declared in a headline, "Brownback Can Kiss '08 Run Goodbye."

Brownback hasn't even kicked off a 2008 run, so it's a little premature to kiss off anything. He does admit that he's thinking about a race. "I've done a lot of early traveling, trying to assess the atmosphere," he says. If he eventually throws his hat in the ring, his campaign may come to resemble the efforts of John Ashcroft and Steve Forbes in previous cycles—not an especially attractive comparison, given their lack of success, but also a potentially powerful blend of faith and free markets. It is possibly more conceivable to think of Brownback as a running mate.

An important lesson for Brownback may be found in the life of Wilberforce, who never was able to put the post of prime minister on his résumé. Today, however, Wilberforce is perhaps better remembered and more loved than any of the prime ministers of his time—nobody, after all, is making a movie about Spencer Perceval. It is possible, in other words, to be the inspirational leader of a moral movement without ever becoming the political leader of a country. **NR**

■ **PUBLIC POLICY**

Immigrants In, Wages Down

How to do the figuring

GEORGE J. BORJAS

Do immigrants harm the employment prospects of native-born Americans? If so, how serious is the harm? Economists have analyzed these questions for the past quarter-century. Most of the early studies concluded that the wage impact of immigration was small. But newly available evidence is slowly breaking down this consensus. In fact, immigration may have depressed the wages of low-skilled workers by 5 to 8 percentage points.

In the last few weeks, the academic discussion of how best to measure the wage impact of immigration has spilled over into the policy debate over tighter borders, a proposed amnesty for 11 million illegal immigrants, and the adoption of a guest-worker program that would admit around 400,000 temporary workers annually. What does economic theory have to say about the impact of immigration on wages?

The laws of supply and demand imply that, other things being equal, an increase in the number of low-skilled immigrants will lower the wages of comparable native workers, at least in the short run, because they now face stiffer competition in the labor market. In contrast, high-skilled workers may gain from the influx of immigrant labor. Not only will they pay less for the services these laborers provide, such as painting the house and mowing the lawn, but by hiring immigrant workers they will be able to specialize in producing the goods and services to which their skills are better suited.

ACROSS CITIES

So how much do the wages of low-skilled workers go down? And how much do the wages of high-skilled workers go up?

One approach to answering these questions follows from the fact that immigrants typically cluster in a small number of geographic areas. Over a third of working-age immigrants in the United States in 2000 lived in only three metropolitan areas (New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago). In contrast, only about 10 percent of U.S. natives live in those cities. In 1982, Jean Baldwin Grossman began the modern literature on the wage impact of immigration by exploiting this geographic clustering. Her study, as well as the many related studies that soon followed, argues along the following lines: If immigrants really decrease the wages of competing workers, native wages should be lower in cities like Los Angeles than in cities like Pittsburgh, where few immigrants reside.

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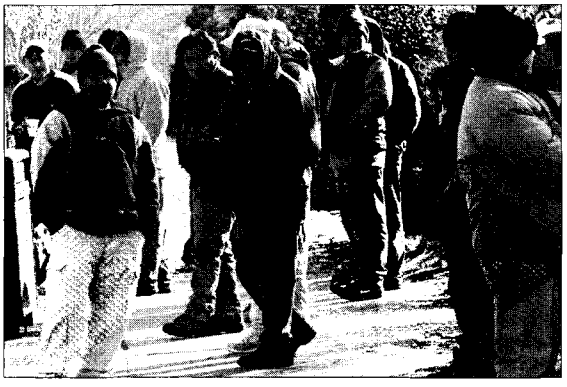
To test this hypothesis, the typical cross-city study calculates the correlation between the native wage (or some measure of native employment) in a locality and the number of immigrants in that locality, after adjusting for other factors that might affect wages. A negative correlation, meaning that native wages are lower in markets penetrated by immigrants, indicates that immigrants indeed worsen the employment prospects of competing natives.

What do the studies find? There's a lot of variation in the results, but any objective appraisal of the literature would have to conclude that the estimated cross-city correlations cluster around zero. That is, there appears to be no clear correlation between immigrants and native wages—and the seeming absence of such a correlation has helped establish the conventional wisdom that immigrants don't much affect labor markets.

This consensus was greatly reinforced by the ease with which the Miami seemed to have weathered the so-called Mariel influx. On April 20, 1980, Fidel Castro declared that Cuban nationals wishing to move to the United States could leave freely from the port of Mariel. By September 1980, about 125,000 Cubans had accepted the offer, and almost overnight these "Marielitos" increased Miami's workforce by 7 percent. In a very clever and influential study published in 1991, David Card reasoned that if immigration indeed harms employment opportunities for natives, the labor-market trend from pre- to post-Mariel Miami should differ from the trends of "comparison" cities that did not experience the Mariel influx, such as Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, and Tampa.



Day laborers converge in Virginia

Yet Card found that trends in Miami's wage levels and unemployment rates between 1979 and 1981 were similar to or better than those of the comparison cities. For example, the unemployment rate for Miami's blacks rose from 8.3 to 9.6 percent, but the black unemployment rate in the comparison cities rose even faster, from 10.3 to 12.6 percent. The obvious inference? That the Marielitos did not adversely affect the employment opportunities of African-Americans. The increase in black unemployment was attributable to worsening macroeconomic conditions—and if we take Card's results at face value, they seem to suggest that immigration actually made the increase in black unemployment *less* than it otherwise would have been!

But during the 1990s, some economists began to doubt whether the apparent weakness of cross-city correlations proved that immigration had little impact on wages. In 1997, I published a paper with my Harvard colleagues Richard Freeman and Lawrence Katz that addressed this question. We noted two pitfalls in the cross-city approach.

First, immigrants are not randomly distributed across cities. They pick some labor markets and avoid others—and, not surprisingly, it's the booming high-wage areas that tend to attract them. The economic data might therefore reveal a positive correlation between immigration and wages—but it would be wrong to conclude from this correlation that immigration *causes* the attractive labor conditions. In fact, the opposite is more likely: that the immigration is caused by, and not the cause of, a good job market. It might even be that immigration is having an adverse effect on the local labor market, which would be even better without immigrants.

Second, natives will likely respond to immigration. After all, it's not in their interest to sit still and not take advantage of new opportunities. Suppose California is flooded with a large number of low-skilled workers. Laborers in Michigan or Mississippi who were thinking of moving to California before that influx will quickly learn that their potential wages in California have been reduced, and many will accordingly decide to stay where they are or move someplace other than California. And some Californians might even find it worthwhile to move to other states. These migration responses diffuse the labor-market impact of immigration over the entire nation, in the process equalizing wages across regions. So it wouldn't be surprising to find little correlation in a given locale between immigration and wages.

This pattern is reinforced if employers also respond to immigration patterns. They see the lower wages in cities flooded by low-skilled immigrants and relocate to those cities; and entrepreneurs thinking about starting new firms will find it more profitable to do so in immigrant-dense areas. But the jobs that flow into these cities are moving from someplace else: Once again, the job flows diffuse the impact of immigration over the national economy.

In the end, a comparison of the wages of native Californians to those of native workers in other states might show little or no difference, since immigration affected *every* region, not just regions with the highest concentrations of immigrants.

LOOKING AT THE NATION WHOLE

If it's true that local conditions adjust to immigration, this suggests that we can study the wage effects of immigration only by observing them at the national level. I introduced this national approach in a 2003 article published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, where I examined how wages evolved for specific skill groups (as defined by education and age) from 1960 to 2000.

To understand this approach, suppose that recent immigration has substantially increased the supply of high-school dropouts. The labor-market implications of this increase would depend on how the age distribution of the immigrant dropouts compared with that of the native dropouts. One set of native high-school dropouts would be affected if the new low-skilled immigrants were very young, and a very different set would be affected if the immigrants were near retirement age. Now it happens that, in practice, not only has the educational distribution of immigrants changed over time, but so has their age distribution. This should mean that different skill groups of American workers have been affected differently at different points in recent history. And this variation should let us determine whether the groups that experienced the greatest immigrant penetration are also the groups whose wages grew most slowly over the past few decades.

It turns out that it's easy to demonstrate a strong link between

ALEX WONG/GETTY

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earnings and immigration across these skill groups. I calculated the wage growth for each skill group in every decade between 1960 and 2000, as well as the corresponding change in the fraction of that skill group's workforce that was foreign-born. The data showed an obvious negative correlation between wage growth and immigration: Wages grew fastest for workers in the skill groups that were least affected by immigration.

My results suggest that wages fall by 3 to 4 percent for every 10 percent increase in the number of workers in a particular skill group. This wage response (or "wage elasticity," to use the economics jargon) is just what one would expect if one had looked at the vast economics literature on how labor demand adjusts (a literature that exists pretty much outside the immigration debate). In other words, the national wage-elasticity estimates I found mirror precisely what we already know about labor demand in the United States.

It's worth emphasizing that this 3 percent "rule of thumb" is calculated using actual labor-market data over a 40-year period. It does not rely on any theoretical restrictions. It's simply what we find when we let the numbers speak.

As I've mentioned, immigration affects the wages not only of low-skilled workers, but of high-skilled workers as well. Estimating the full-blown set of wage responses requires a theoretical model that summarizes all of the possible interactions in the U.S. labor market in a tractable fashion. The last half of my 2003 study presents such a model, and in a 2005 paper Lawrence Katz and I simulated the model to describe how the immigrant influx between 1980 and 2000 altered the wage structure.

Here's what we found. In the short run—holding all other things equal—immigration lowered the wages of native workers, particularly of workers at the bottom and top of the education distribution. The average wage fell by 8 percent for high-school dropouts and by 4 percent for college graduates. (The wages of college graduates fell because the 1980–2000 influx was composed not just of low-skilled immigrants, but of high-skilled workers as well.) Overall, wages of the typical native worker fell by 3.3 percent.

The "all other things equal" assumption is less plausible when looking from a longer time perspective. Over time, the economy adjusts as employers make capital investments that take advantage of the cheaper workers. We don't know whether these adjustments take place in one year or ten years or twenty years (or if, paraphrasing Keynes, after we're all dead). Nevertheless, even after all the possible adjustments that can be made have been made, our model still finds that the wage of high-school dropouts falls by 5 percent over the long term.

Katz and I also examined how much of these wage effects could be traced to the large-scale immigration of low-skilled Mexican workers. We calculated what the wage effects would have been if there hadn't been any Mexican immigration during that period, and found that Mexicans account for *all* of the adverse impact of immigration on low-skilled native workers.

These simulation results have been widely cited in the press in recent weeks—and a criticism has been raised against them. It has been said that our simulation depends too much on a theoretical model—that we are simply spitting out the results that model gives us rather than looking at the actual American economy. Economists of course use models all the time to simulate how the economy reacts to policy changes. Pointing out that a result comes from a model is not a way of disproving the soundness of that result. What matters is whether the model is an accurate simulation of the real economy. In this case, it looks like the model is.

I mentioned earlier that the raw data revealed a 3 percent rule of thumb—a drop of 3 to 4 percentage points in a skill group's wages for every 10 percent increase in its workforce. Between 1980 and 2000, immigration increased the number of workers in the United States by 11.1 percent, and increased the number of workers who are high-school dropouts by 22.8 percent. Using the 3 percent rule of thumb, the predicted wage effects would therefore be 3.3 percent for the typical worker and 6.8 percent for high-school dropouts. Those numbers—based on actual wage trends over the last 40 years—are very close to the results our model produces, and underscore its usefulness in predicting the trends of the U.S. economy.

INVITATIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Of all the immigration proposals under serious consideration, the guest-worker program will likely have the largest economic impact. The best available evidence suggests that this program will almost surely have an adverse effect on the opportunities of competing native workers.

The typical rationale for a guest-worker program is that the country needs immigrants to keep many of its industries running: "Immigrants do jobs that natives won't do." One fortunate byproduct of the current debate is that this assertion has finally been exposed as the economic nonsense it is. There is no such thing as a job that natives won't do. Instead, there are jobs that natives aren't willing to do at the going wage. In the absence of immigrant labor, wages in those jobs would rise and attract native workers. Put simply, markets adjust.

What past immigration has done—and what the temporary-worker program will do on an even larger scale—is depress wages and increase the profits of employers, at least in the short run. Over time, some of the wage reduction would be attenuated, and some of the cost savings would be passed on to consumers. Nevertheless, economics teaches an important lesson: Immigration redistributes wealth. And this lesson helps us understand the political dynamics of the ongoing debate. Would employers lobby so hard for a guest-worker program or more high-tech visas if these things wouldn't make it cheaper to hire workers?

The wealth redistribution created by current immigration generates a surplus for the U.S. economy. That is, the losses suffered by workers are numerically smaller than the gains accruing to employers. But all available estimates of this surplus suggest it is small—no larger than 0.2 percent of GDP. Moreover, it's quite plausible that the surplus gets eaten away by immigrant-related expenditures on things like schooling and welfare.

In fact, it wouldn't be implausible to conjecture that, on net, immigration is approximately a wash for the U.S. economy. But increasing immigration would split the economic pie differently, with gains concentrated among those who hire immigrants or use a lot of immigrant-provided services, and losses concentrated among low-skilled workers. That's the *economics* of it. The desirability of these transfers is a *political* question—and that is what's at the core of the immigration debate. **NR**

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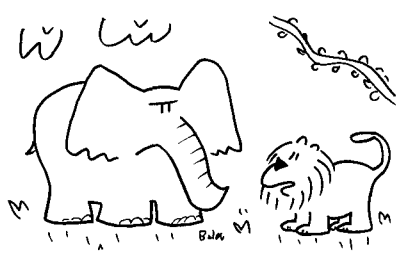
HELP!!!!

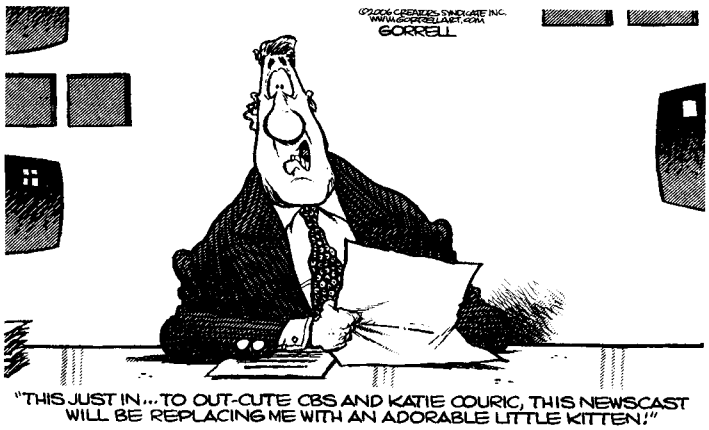
Border Etiquette

Lichtenstein has border guards.
Thais examine plastic cards.
Soviets were more than rude
When airliners would intrude.
Teddy's for revolving doors.
Sensitive McCain abhors
Minutemen who make a face
At migrants with no suitcase.

—W. H. von Dreele



"I know you can't forget, but you can move on."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"THIS JUST IN... TO OUT-CUTE CBS AND KATIE COURIC, THIS NEWSCAST WILL BE REPLACING ME WITH AN ADORABLE LITTLE KITTEN!"

"OH, YES, PRESIDENT AHMADINEJAD! MUCH BETTER THAN THE BEARD!"

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the long view

ROB LONG

Transcript: *Larry King Live*, May 5, 2006

LARRY KING: "Tomorrow night! Remembering Don Knotts! A surprising hour! From Chicago, Illinois, you're on with our guest, Judas Iscariot! Hello!"

CALLER: "Hi, Larry. Hi, Judas. Can I call you Judas?"

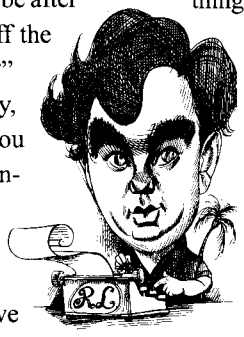
JUDAS ISCARIOT: "Of course."

CALLER: "It's just that I feel like I've known you all my life, so I feel like I can call you Judas. I just want to say that I just finished your gospel, which I loved, and I'd like to know if you have any more books planned?"

LARRY KING: "Good question. Is this thing the start of a franchise? I keep thinking *Da Vinci Code*, I keep thinking *Narnia*."

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "No, no, Larry. It's just the one gospel. At least for now."

LARRY KING: "But they gotta be after you, right? Phone ringing off the hook? Books, movies, right?"



JUDAS ISCARIOT: "Honestly, Larry, I live a quiet life. You know, when they quote unquote found my gospel—the publishing world is crazy, I wrote the damn thing 2,000 years ago and have been pushing it and pushing it and pushing it, suddenly it's out there and I'm a quote unquote overnight success—anyway, they find it, we make a deal—"

LARRY KING: "Was it a good deal?"

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "You know what, Larry? It was fair. I can't complain about the deal."

LARRY KING: "Thirty pieces of silver, and all that? Kidding!"

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "Listen, Larry, you gotta have a sense of humor about life."

LARRY KING: "Here I am the Jew talking about pieces of silver! Gotta tread careful with this stuff, am I right?"

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "Interestingly, Larry, I'm Jewish too."

LARRY KING: "Yeah, but not from Brooklyn."

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "No. From the Levant. But as you know, we were all of us, all of the apostles, originally of the Jewish faith before . . ."

LARRY KING: "The original Jews for Jesus! Good stuff. Tuesday! Erectile dysfunction! The whole hour! From Baton Rouge, Louisiana, hello!"

CALLER: "Hi, Larry. I'd like to ask your guest how he feels about the way he's been portrayed in the media for the past 2,000 years."

LARRY KING: "Good question. They've put your name through the wringer, right? Judas this, Judas that. Bitter?"

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "Oh yeah, sure. Very. For years. And that's one of the great things about seeing my gospel finally translated and out there. It's my story. I'm reclaiming my name in a way, and it's been immensely healthy and positive and just really forward-moving, you know? It's like, they can say anything they like about me now because, hey, here's me, here's my voice, here's Judas *by* Judas, you know?"

LARRY KING: "You're talking to a guy who's written a few books himself."

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "It's a very healthy act."

LARRY KING: "Brother, you got that right. From Modesto, California, hello!"

CALLER: "Hi, Larry. I'd like to ask your guest how he squares his version of the story with the more famous versions already in the New Testament? As a believing Christian, Larry, I have to say that although I applaud him for coming forward and telling his story, the definitive accounts had already been written and compiled before anyone ever heard of the so-called *Gospel of Judas*."

LARRY KING: "This is gettin' over my head."

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "Let me just—can I respond to that? I've been hearing that a lot and it's something I want to address. You know, Larry, when I was in the green room a few minutes ago, before coming out, Liza Minnelli said something to me that—"

LARRY KING: "Liza Minnelli! Liza with a 'z'! What can't she do?"

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "She's a consummate entertainer, Larry. Anyway, she said something to me that I thought was very moving and important. She told me that she had read my gospel and that she loved it, and I told her that I've been getting a lot of criticism from people about it. She put her hand on my shoulder and said, 'Hey, truth shmuth!' And then she touched her head and said, 'It's what's in here that matters! And baby, in here we're all scrambled eggs!' And I thought that was very true. So what I'd say to the caller there is that your truth and my truth are very different. People see different things and hear different things depending on their own perspective and background and socioeconomic whatever."

LARRY KING: "And we're all nuts?"

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "All scrambled eggs, Larry."

LARRY KING: "The gospel of Liza! The book is the *Gospel of Judas*, just out and translated! Interesting, tough stuff. Up next! My guest, the Reverend Billy Graham! Judas, are you sticking around for that?"

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "Um . . . no. No . . . I think . . . well, no."

LARRY KING: "Really? Could be interesting to get you two together."

JUDAS ISCARIOT: "I have a flight out of Reagan and . . ."

LARRY KING: "Book-tour madness! Been there, friend!"

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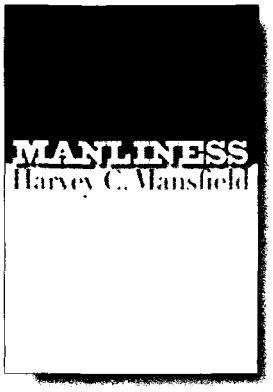
The Male Calling



Manliness,
by Harvey C. Mansfield
(Yale, 304 pp., $27.50)

CHARLES R. KESLER

ASKED by *Harvard Magazine* to comment on a former professor of his, Harvey Mansfield replied, "What impressed all of us about him was his manliness." "There was," Mansfield relates, "silence at the other end of the line, and finally the female voice said: 'Could you think of another word?'"

He doesn't reveal his answer, but in effect his new book is a bracing explanation of why no other word will do. *Manliness* is an essay in definition, defense, and due criticism of the spirited assertiveness that men have in their nature and that a few men (and a very few women: think Margaret Thatcher) have in spades. Many conservative tomes have squared off against radical feminism and its goal of a gender-neutral society. But this one goes deeper and flies higher, tracing and refuting that feminism's philosophical sources, puncturing the scientific pretenses that obscure our view of manliness, and devoting sustained philosophical attention to the good and the bad in manly self-assertion. Through it all, he shows that coming to terms with manliness is essential to both sexes' happiness.

Mr. Kesler is a senior fellow of the Claremont Institute and editor of the *Claremont Review of Books*.

Mansfield is a professor of government at Harvard, where he is well known as the gadfly who campaigns against grade inflation (Harvey C-minus Mansfield, as he's known on campus, though actually he doesn't grade all that hard; I know, I was his student). He is notorious for opposing affirmative action and women's studies, too. When the latter came before the faculty for approval, several hundred voted in favor, a handful abstained or did not vote, and one professor voted against. That was Mansfield. More important, he *spoke* against the proposal, pointing out, among other things, that "women" are not a discipline like economics or archaeology, and that women are always found in societies with men and hence should be studied alongside men. Oh yes, and that considering the contents of the proposed reading lists, the department should not be called women's studies but feminist studies. Clearly, Mansfield is no stranger to manly deeds.

He makes no mention of this skirmish in his book, which like all of his writings operates at a remarkably high and dispassionate level of scholarship. Mansfield's lifework has been to trace the principal institutions and practices of modern politics to their inspiration in modern political philosophy—to let us see how new and revolutionary these actually are.

Thus in *Statesmanship and Party Government*, his first book, a penetrating study of Burke and Bolingbroke, he explained how political parties became respectable parts of everyday political life. (They didn't use to be; ask George Washington.) In *The Spirit of Liberalism* and other essays, Mansfield outlined the character of modern "indirect" or representative government, as well as the peculiarities of the "media world," which claims somehow to be representative, too. In a series of powerful studies of Machiavelli's political thought culminating in *Taming the Prince*, Mansfield exhibited the origins of executive power together with Locke's and the American Founders' domestication of it. Along the way, he translated (inter alia) Machiavelli's *Prince* and (with his wife, Delba Winthrop) Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*.

In *Manliness*, too, Mansfield deals with politics' debt to political philosophy, though he acknowledges that modern technology has had its own profound impact on relations between the sexes. For in the past half-century, America has gone where no society has gone before—pursuing a thoroughgoing sexual equality, and abjuring the older view that, even in a democracy, men and women are beings of equal worth but different fates. The revolution shows in our speech. Etiquette demands that 17-year-old college coeds are women, not—ever!—girls. "All the man-words," Mansfield notes, "have been brought to account and corrected. Mankind has become humankind," person of the year has replaced man of the year, and the lowly "he" has been roundly condemned as sexist.

The new feminists sought an equality that went beyond having the same formal rights, e.g., to be chairman of the board. They sought effective equality, which implied that they were "similar to, or virtually the same as, men," and thus that they should be as independent of men as possible, and as professionally successful, too. Mansfield does not distinguish between equity feminists and gender feminists, the former who sought equal opportunity and the latter equal results, perhaps because he thinks the distinction finally untenable; but he acknowledges that most feminists nowadays want to make a career, not a revolution. That still leaves them with a dilemma: whether to conceive of themselves as gender-neutral persons (no different from men) or as women struggling in a man's world. Many feminists, he writes, "do not believe in sex roles (since you mustn't think of yourself as a woman) but do believe in role models (since you must think of yourself as a woman)."

The change in mores and law was epochal, and Mansfield wonders at the lack of resistance to it. "There was no George Wallace, no Bull Connor, no massive resistance to oppose the women's movement. No men of our time had the nerve to make fun of the feminists as men did of the suffragettes a century ago. . . . The American patriarch, if you want to call him that, was perhaps at this stage

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nothing more formidable than Dagwood Bumstead, bumbling husband of Blondie, manly only when tackling his hero sandwich." Mansfield may have forgotten the arch-anti-feminist Archie Bunker, but the point of *All in the Family* was not merely to laugh with but to laugh *at* Archie, bringing him closer, at least, to Dagwood's level. So Mansfield's point survives.

Feminism's victory was greater in public than in private, however. Despite their public capitulation, men still don't like to do the dishes or split the housework 50-50, and men still gravitate disproportionately to risky, highly competitive, and high-profile jobs. When the firemen and policemen swarmed up the Twin Towers as everybody else was rushing desperately down them, Americans were reminded of manliness's nobler side—and of the continuing need for it.

But what *is* manliness, exactly? Mansfield begins from common sense or ordinary opinions about the sexes. These tend to be dismissed today as stereotypes (a scientific putdown), but Mansfield shows that science, in the form of social psychology and evolutionary biology, confirms the stereotypes again and again. Men are more aggressive, women more caring; men like to take the lead and show off, women are contextual and modest; male athletes spit, women athletes don't. (Did you know science proves that women fear spiders more than men do?) But Mansfield shows that these sciences distort the sex roles by trying to measure and quantify them, splitting men and women into discrete behaviors but never reassembling these into a whole. Evolutionary biology, based on Darwinism, is especially guilty of this simplification, and Mansfield pours cold water on Darwinism's conclusions and its premises. He shows, in a few tightly argued pages, that not necessarily an *intelligent* design but an *intelligible* design is presupposed by all of Darwin's evolutionism.

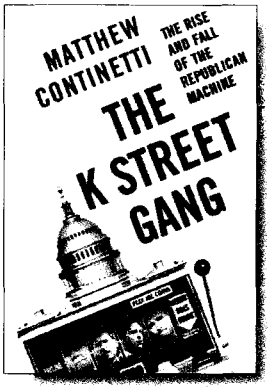
The sciences tend to reduce manliness to aggression, when really it is more of an assertion, that is, spiritedness accompanied by a reason or justification. Too little of this assertiveness and you end up with the "men without chests" diagnosed so brilliantly by C. S. Lewis in *The Abolition of Man*: the sensitive men who are supposed to inhabit the gender-neutral society, Nietzsche's "last men." Too much assertiveness and you get what Mansfield calls "manly nihilism," the notion that all meaning is created by human beings, specifically by super-manly supermen.

Many post-Darwinians flirted with this idea (Theodore Roosevelt among them, and Mansfield has amusing criticisms of him), but Nietzsche thought it through. And strange to say, radical feminism's chief theorist, Simone de Beauvoir, turned Nietzsche's doctrine to her own account, creating "womanly nihilism." This is Mansfield's term for radical feminists' manly attempt to overcome their nature and nurture in the direction of an indefinite freedom. Though undefinable (otherwise it would be limited), this freedom has a telltale political marker: the attack on the family, which separates today's radical feminists from their moderate sisters.

By now it is clear that our world suffers not only from too little genuine manliness (as in gentlemanship) but also from too much nihilistic manliness, whether practiced by women or men. So Mansfield finishes his inquiry by examining the political and moral forms that discipline and encourage manliness at its best: the liberal state (based on the "rights of man" but depending often on manly men to vindicate those rights) and classical philosophy, especially Plato and Aristotle, who show how primitive *thymos* or spiritedness may be cultivated into the virtue of courage, and transcended by the philosophical courage that reminds manly men of the limits of the active life. Here philosophers reinforce women's stereotypical virtues of reminding their men of their limitations, and urging them to listen and think before acting.

Readers of *Manliness* (especially educated women, to whom Mansfield would like particularly to appeal) will be alternately charmed and exasperated, but they will be challenged to think, and as a result may well view the world differently than they did before. They will recognize manliness, or the lack of it, or a perversion of it, all around them. In this sense, *Manliness* deserves to be compared to Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind* as an unforgettable wake-up call to our slumbering liberal society. **NR**

Not *Our* Gang



The K Street Gang: The Rise and Fall of the Republican Machine, by Matthew Continetti (Doubleday, 273 pp., $24.95)

KATE O'BEIRNE

"I THINK the key thing to remember with all these clients is that they are annoying, but that the annoying losers are the only ones which have this kind of money and part with it so quickly," Jack Abramoff counseled his protégé and partner in crime Michael Scanlon three years ago. "This kind of money" included $80 million in fees from Indian tribes with lucrative casinos, who parted with it so quickly they failed to notice that Abramoff and Scanlon were a poor bet. As Matthew Continetti points out in his new book, "A lack of success is one of the Abramoff saga's recurring themes—a lot of people paid him a lot of money, but no one, in the end, can tell you exactly what the clients got in return."

As we now know, within a year of that contemptuous comment about their loser clients, Abramoff and Scanlon themselves were the big losers. The FBI launched an investigation in 2003 and both now face

Kate O'Beirne, NR's Washington editor, is the author of *Women Who Make the World Worse: and How Their Radical Feminist Assault Is Ruining Our Schools, Families, Military, and Sports.*

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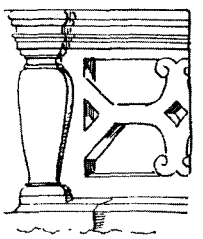
jail sentences, having pled guilty to criminal charges arising from their greedy schemes. Continetti provides fascinating details and fresh insights into the construction and crumbling of the corrupt house that Jack built. The Abramoff saga, as colorful as its amoral central character, includes a woman scorned and a dash of *Miami Vice* along with bribery, fraud, forgery, tax evasion, and a level of greed rarely witnessed by Washington.

While Continetti compellingly recounts the Jack Abramoff story, his book is less successful in its attempt to portray the greedy behavior and outrageous tactics of the disgraced lobbyist as representative of his profession, the conservative movement, and the Republican party—indeed, as the inevitable result of the GOP's congressional majority. With a dismay befitting the idealistic and disillusioned young conservative—he is a *Weekly Standard* writer and a former NATIONAL REVIEW intern—Continetti reports that as chairman of the College Republicans in 1984 Abramoff was once seen as "the spokesman for a new generation of conservative activists, young men and women coming of age just as their party was coming into power." Grover Norquist and Ralph Reed were among those coming of age, along with Abramoff, in the College Republicans—where their staunch anti-Communist and small-government politics shared a "paramilitary flavor." Continetti sees in the trio a shared moral failing representative of "a generation, it would turn out, that was corrupted by power before they knew what power was."



Abramoff, Norquist, and Reed realized, according to Continetti, that a credentialed conservative and party loyalist could cash in when his ideology neatly coincided with moneyed interests. Following the Republican takeover in 1995, GOP operatives learned what their Democratic counterparts had no doubt previously figured out: They could bill clients for pushing initiatives the congressional majority was already inclined to support.

In the millions paid to Jack Abramoff during the late 1990s by the Northern Mariana Islands—the U.S. territory in the Pacific that wanted to remain exempt from federal labor regulations—Continetti sees all the ingredients of his signature lobbying schemes: lavish junkets for lawmakers and their aides, outrageous fees for mundane letters and meetings, and the dressing-up of clients' interests in ideological clothing. The cause of statehood for Puerto Rico, officially endorsed by the Republican party, also proved lucrative for Abramoff as well as for Ralph Reed's consulting firm.

But even the island governments' deep pockets didn't compare to the rich new possible clients on K Street's block. "There are a ton of potential opportunities out there," Abramoff alerted Scanlon, who had left majority leader Tom DeLay's office to go to work with him. "There are 27 tribes which make over $100 million a year (according to a NY Times piece on Nov 24—can you have your guys do the research and find out which tribes these may be?) We need to get moving on them." Scanlon's "guys" were the former lifeguard and former yoga instructor who made up his phony think tank headquartered in a Delaware beach house.

Because Abramoff had no intention of sharing his largesse with his firm—or of reporting his fees, as required by law—his clients were told to pay huge sums to Scanlon (the "best in the business," he would ludicrously assure the naïve tribes), who kicked back millions to the faux charities Abramoff created and wholly controlled. Some of this gambling lucre made its way to Abramoff's old buddies, Norquist and Reed, although Reed maintains he didn't know the source of the money sent indirectly to his firm to rally social conservatives against gambling competitors.

If Reed was kept in the dark, he had plenty of company. In exploiting the multiple tribes that eventually hired him, Abramoff deceived his clients, the members of his firm, his congressional allies, and even his cohorts in crime. As just one example of the secretive nature of Abramoff's schemes, Continetti cites the fact that Tony Rudy, another former DeLay aide who went to work with Abramoff and has since pled guilty to a corruption-conspiracy charge, was unaware that his crooked boss was using a charitable foundation as a shell for his huge fees. "Everyone was lacking a full picture," Continetti concludes.

The full story about one of Abramoff's business ventures still isn't known. Not content with his lobbying riches, Abramoff decided to get into the casino business himself and, along with a shady partner, purchased the eleven-ship fleet of the Fort Lauderdale–based SunCruz Casino line. The seller winds up murdered, and Abramoff pleads guilty to fraud, in this fascinating, well-told episode in the Abramoff epic.

In the end, Continetti's detailed reporting provides the goods on a handful of Washington fixers and raises questions about the complicity of a couple of members of Congress. Although he asserts that legislative power has been turned over to paid interests, his acknowledgment that little was actually accomplished by Abramoff in behalf of his credulous clients, despite his lavish wining and dining of lawmakers and their aides and his wheeling and dealing in big political contributions, contradicts the book's wholesale indictment of a generation of conservative activists, Washington lobbyists, and the Republican majority because Jack Abramoff walked among them. Matt Continetti tells a good tale about scams, scoundrels, and schemers, but it's not the tale of a town. **NR**

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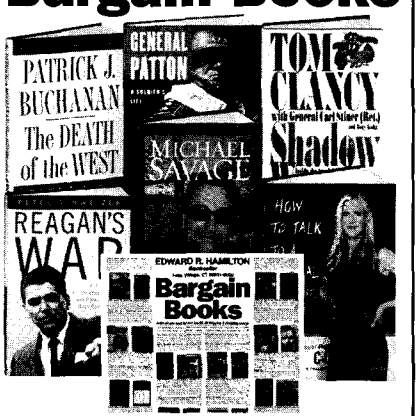

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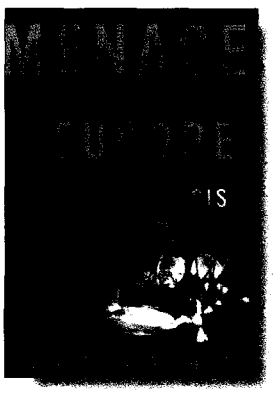
Euro Scare?



Menace in Europe: Why the Continent's Crisis Is America's, Too, by Claire Berlinski (Crown Forum, 288 pp., $25.95)

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

THERE's a bright, shining, merciful moment, right towards the end of this infuriating, odd, but occasionally perceptive polemic, when its author, Claire Berlinski, says what needs saying about the rancid and rabid anti-Americanism now disgracing Europe's public discourse: "[It] is a cultist system of faith, rather than a set of rational beliefs, and as such is impervious to revision upon confrontation with facts, logic, evidence, gestures of good will, public relations campaigns, or attempts on the part of the American secretary of state to be a better, more sensitive listener."

Accurate enough, but her observation that there is nothing Americans can do to change this, "short of dying politely en masse," suggests that Ms. Berlinski, a lively writer always happy to hype up the snark and the spark of her prose, is taking her readers not to France, or Germany, but to Planet Coulter. When, in another all-too-typical passage, Europe's past is described as "one of nearly uninterrupted war and savagery," it's impossible to avoid thinking that while American anti-Europeanism is comparatively rare, given reason to flower—I note without further comment that Ms. Berlinski studied French literature at the Sorbonne—it can be just as irrational as the hatred for America stewing in the cafés of the Left Bank.

Oh, and while we're on the topic, it may be quite true that Europe's history is scarred by slaughter, but it's quite false to suggest that this is something specific to that part of the world. Mass murder, butchery, invasion, and conquest are what humans do. All races. All cultures. Always have done. Always will do. Europe stands out only because of the extraordinary achievement that is the best of its civilization. It is not the corpses that surprise, but the contrasts: the juxtaposition of the charnel house and the cathedral, the victims trudging to the ovens to the sounds of an orchestra.

But this is not the sort of analysis you'll find in *Menace in Europe* (lurid title, lurid book), a work dedicated to the wider, wilder, and highly marketable thesis of a possibly doomed, probably desperate, and certainly dangerous continent drifting into a gathering storm of economic failure, demographic crisis, and ethno-religious strife. Now, while Europe is undoubtedly facing (or, more accurately, failing to face) some very profound problems, it's way too soon to be writing its obituaries. Claire Berlinski is careful to hedge her hints of apocalypse with caveats ("I do not prophesy the imminent demise of European democratic institutions, nor do I predict imminent catastrophe on European soil"), but there's a clear sense that she, for one, is preparing for the funeral ("I don't rule out these possibilities. . . . It is possible and reasonable to imagine a very ugly outcome").

And, as has been the case with a number of other recent books on the Old World's predicament (George Weigel's *The Cube and the Cathedral* is a striking example), the logic of Berlinski's thesis leads her to exaggeration. It has to, because the facts alone will not do the trick. So, for instance, it's not enough for her to insinuate (with appropriate disclaimers) that the nastier ghosts of Europe's past may be slouching towards rebirth, she also has to throw in the claim that "Europeans . . . sense in their lives a cultural, spiritual, and ideological void." Good heavens (or not).

Certainly Europeans generally, and for excellent reasons, tend to be less optimistic than their counterparts across the Atlantic, but there's no particular reason to think that (at least outside the more neurasthenic sections of the intelligentsia) they are wandering around their cities enveloped in black mists of angst, ennui, and existential despair. Quite how you measure a continent's contentment, I do not know, but for what it's worth, one recent (2004) Eurobarometer poll revealed that 85 percent of EU citizens were either fairly (54 percent) or very (31 percent) satisfied with their lives. Existence in a cultural, spiritual, and ideological void is not, it seems, quite as dreadful as some commentators appear to believe.

Far too often, Berlinski's need to stick to her Chicken Little line forces her narrative in a direction that it should not take. A brutally effective demolition of French "peasant" leader José Bové (the clown who trashed a McDonald's) dissipates into a discussion of the holy fools, cranks, fanatics, and zealots who have been bothering the continent for generations. It makes for some interesting history, but it's irrelevant, and, if it is designed to demonstrate that susceptibility to psychopaths, charlatans, and madmen is (like war, genocide, and the rest of the rap sheet) a particularly European vice, it's thoroughly misleading.

Similarly, the author passes over the opportunity to look at the (admittedly slim) prospects of a much-needed patriotic revival within Europe's nations in favor of a lengthy and rather overwrought examination of the meaning of Rammstein, a popular German heavy-metal band that combines the style of Spinal Tap with the aesthetics of Albert Speer. Yes, this makes for good, alarming copy, and it's a convenient device to bring up yet again the subject of that miserable Reich, but, in the end, Claire Berlinski's horrified descriptions of leather, sleaze, bombast, and kitsch do little more than remind us that German rock is, like German cuisine, usually best avoided.

There are times too when she appears to have drunk too deeply of her own Kool-Aid. Suitably enough, given the doom and gloom that permeates this book, some of its strongest, and most convincing, sections relate to an area

Mr. Stuttaford is a contributing editor of National Review Online.

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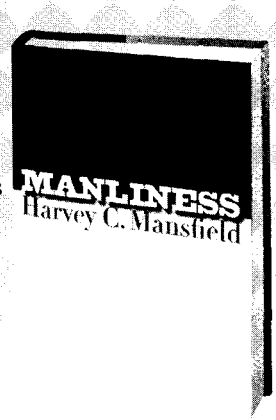
"Powerful,"[1] "enthralling,"[2] "fascinating"[3]

MANLINESS

Harvey C. Mansfield



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AMERICA AT THE CROSSROADS

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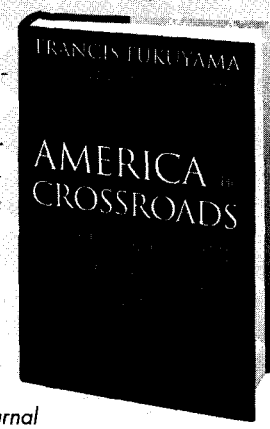

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A History

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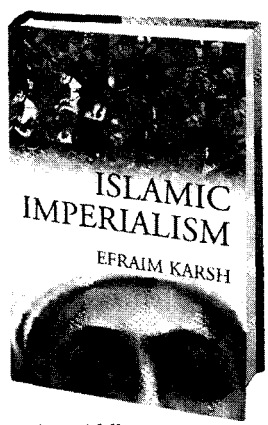

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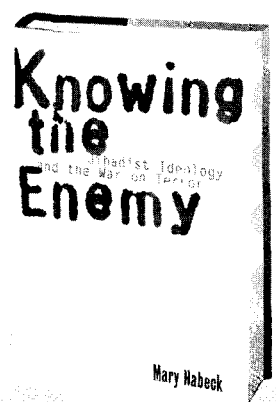

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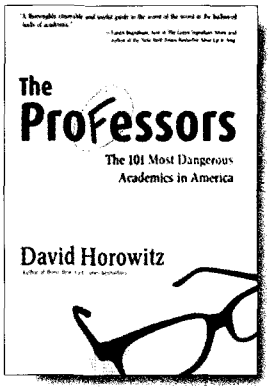
where some panic is indeed called for: Europe's failure to integrate its growing Muslim minorities. It's a problem that will only be made worse by additional inflows from the Islamic world, yet Berlinski's overblown fears about the viability of an aging society mean that that mass immigration is, apparently, an "economic necessity." (It's anything but.) Equally, while she understands that the EU is no more than "a marriage of convenience" (a gross oversimplification, actually, but it will do), her nightmare vision of a feeble and feral continent leads her to describe this ill-starred union as "politically and economically imperative." It is neither: It is, rather, both a symptom and a cause of Europe's current impasse.

What makes *Menace in Europe* all the more frustrating is that, amidst the shouts of alarm, cries of disaster, and howls of invective, there are some very valuable insights, and, particularly in a sharp analysis of how Marseilles manages its multicultural population, some excellent reporting. In the end, however, they only compound the impression that this book is an opportunity missed.

How very European. **NR**

Take Back The Schools



The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America, by David Horowitz (Regnery, 448 pp., $27.95)

ALSTON B. RAMSAY

In most professions, winning East Germany's International Lenin Peace Prize—formerly known as the Stalin Peace Prize—isn't much of a career booster. Nor is running for vice president of the United States on the Communist party ticket. And, surely, being implicated in a hostage plot that ends in a judge's murder via a sawed-off-shotgun blast to the head cannot help matters. But these résumé checkmarks have not prevented Prof. Angela Davis (who, incidentally, purchased the aforementioned shotgun only weeks before the murder) from earning one of the highest accolades bestowed by the University of California system: She is one of only seven "University Professors," with a lifelong appointment and a six-figure salary.

Professor Davis is not alone: David Horowitz's latest book, *The Professors*, chronicles the "research" and outrages of the 101 "most dangerous academics in America." Most of the book is devoted to a series of vignettes, from two to five pages, exposing these charlatans with their own words and actions: Nicholas De Genova, who called for a "million Mogadishus" in Iraq; Norman Finkelstein, who railed against the "falsification and exploitation of Nazi genocide"; José Gutiérrez, who advocated killing all gringos; bell hooks (née Gloria Watkins), whose lowercase affectation may be related to her belief that standard English resonates with "the sound of slaughter and conquest"; and many, many others.

For anyone who has monitored higher education's pulse rate even cursorily during the last three decades, the central premise of *The Professors* will come as no surprise: Our universities have been hijacked by a band of rabid, anti-intellectual liberals more concerned with advancing ideological agendas—usually of the "social justice" variety—than with educating students. (Predictably, both the ACLU and the National Education Association have blasted the book.)

Fortunately, however, even the "most dangerous" professors may be less dangerous than they used to be: Internet truth squads—led, sometimes, by Horowitz himself—have been exposing these academic miscreants. The information highway has penetrated the academic cloister, and the sunlight it provides may indeed be the best cure.

Consider, for example, the story of Hamilton College. In the fall of 2004, Hamilton came under fire after Prof. Nancy Rabinowitz, head of the college's Kirkland Project for the Study of Gender, Society, and Culture, hired Susan Rosenberg as

OUTSIDE OF THIS

Who finds heaven on earth will end in hell,
Lovers have proven in a stolen year
When pleasure fell in debt to future pain.
There is joy and peace; then there is rapture
That carries us so far beyond ourselves
We lose all hope of being whole again.
In that sun-drenched room in April,
Drinking ambrosia we thought mere wine
The golden light transmuted in the glass,
You became a goddess and I your god,
Our bed a flying rainbow-curtained cloud;
And you kept asking me if this were real,
And all I could say for kissing you is yes,
Yes, and nothing is real outside of this.

—DANIEL MARK EPSTEIN

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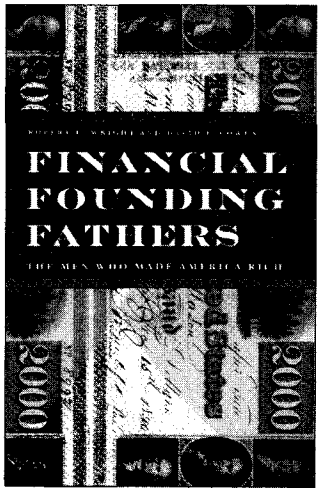

"A much needed book for investors and history buffs. We take for granted America's extraordinary rise to become the economic colossus it is today. But nothing is inevitable in human affairs. Wright and Cowen do excellent work in chronicling the fundamental but oft-underappreciated impact these individuals had on shaping the country we live in today."—Steve Forbes

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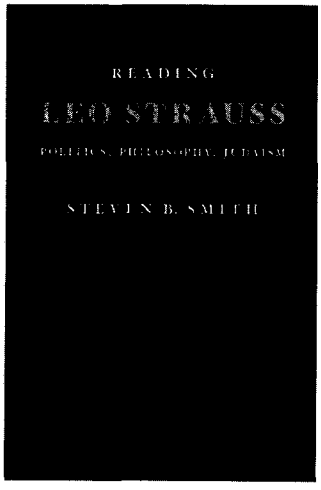

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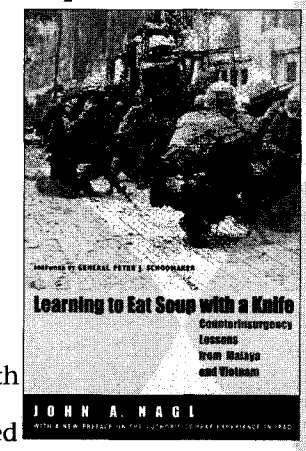

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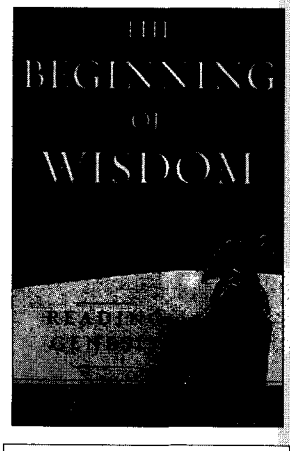

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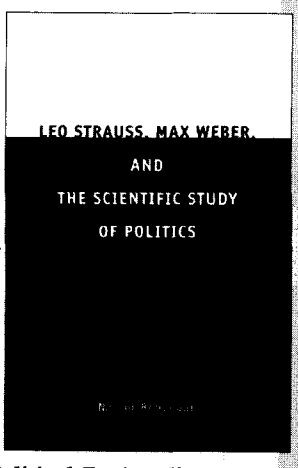

"[This book] will be 'must-reading' for all those who wish to understand better Strauss's ever more widely known position as the most radical and outspoken critic of social science."
—Thomas Pangle, editor of *The Rebirth of Classical Political Rationalism: An Introduction to the Thought of Leo Strauss*

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an artist-in-residence. Rosenberg is a former member of the Weather Underground, was involved in a robbery in which three people—including two policemen—were killed in 1981, and was sentenced to 58 years in prison in 1985 after being caught with 600 pounds of explosives; her sentence was commuted after 16 years by President Clinton. The Kirkland Project billed her as "an award-winning writer, an activist, and a teacher who offers a unique perspective as a writer." When news of this appointment slipped out, a furor rightly ensued, and Hamilton's alumni forced the college to kill the appointment. Shortly thereafter, Professor Rabinowitz invited Ward Churchill to campus, again via the Kirkland Project; the lead-up to that event, which was ultimately cancelled, brought to the nation's attention the infamous quip in which Churchill called 9/11 victims "little Eichmanns."

In Horowitz's telling, this story illustrates just how far the universities have fallen. But the end result paints a more nuanced picture: The Kirkland Center was exposed for the intellectual joke that it was, Rabinowitz was removed as its head, its funding was gutted and its autonomy largely stripped, and Ward Churchill was sent running for the hills. Perhaps more important, the body politic saw just how outrageous universities are at their worst.

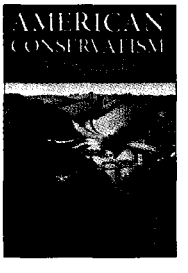
The Hamilton debacle may not be reason for outright optimism, but it surely doesn't warrant the sad resignation Horowitz offers as a response. The rise of conservative campus journals, their presence on the web, and numerous campus bloggers almost certainly provided much of the research that went into *The Professors*, which brings us back to the central irony of the book's subtitle. The more publicity lavished on these professors, the less dangerous they become—if, in fact, they were dangerous to begin with. (I grant that Rosenberg may be an exception, but she is not a professor—yet.) In that respect, *The Professors* deserves accolades, for it provides yet another weapon for those who wish to eject the entrenched ideologues who have corrupted pedagogy with shallow activism. **NR**

■ SHELF LIFE ■

Keeping the Tablets

MICHAEL POTEMRA

"CONSERVATISM," like "liberalism," has been in the United States a remarkably capacious term. Social conservatives, libertarians, paleos, neos, Burkeans, Agrarians, Austrian-school economists, and many other types of thinkers have all sheltered under the word-umbrella "conservatism." In examining a work like ***American Conservatism: An Encyclopedia*** (ISI, 979 pp., $35)—the massive new reference book shepherded by Bruce Frohnen, Jeremy Beer, and Jeffrey O. Nelson, under the auspices of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute—probably the key question to ask is: Does the book include everybody? Not, of course, every figure of some importance within conservatism—even the more than half a million words contained in this volume couldn't promise that—but every important *type* of conservative?



And it is the highest achievement of this book that, yes, all varieties are here, and all are fairly treated. The editors in their introduction disclaim any intention "to establish any orthodox definition of conservatism"; they seek, rather, to provide "information and insight on the persons, schools, . . . and other topics of major importance to the nature and development of the conservative intellectual movement in America since World War II." The two key limitations to be noted here are a) "intellectual"—that is to say, the book has a bias toward theorists, as opposed to those engaged in the daily work of politics and punditry; and b) "since World War II"—pre-1945 issues and events are treated only if they had a direct bearing on postwar American conservatism. And both of these limits are well judged, making the work much more useful than it would otherwise have been. The tone throughout is polite; few intra-conservative body blows are exchanged. David Boaz of the Cato Institute writes the article on libertarianism; paleo historian Paul Gottfried contributes the entry on paleoconservatism.

It is all the more striking, then, that among the few lapses from the overall geniality and evenhandedness is the entry on the most important issue of the day. To write the entry on the Iraq War, the editors chose John Zmirak, who is a passionate and eloquent opponent of the war; and he writes with his customary élan. Zmirak compares some supporters of the war to the French right-wingers who continued, "against all evidence," to persecute Dreyfus, and declares: "Whether the nationalist Right in America will suffer a comparable loss of moral credibility is an open question." I suppose we supporters of the war can be grateful that Zmirak believes our loss of moral credibility remains an open question; but from our perspective, a war to overthrow a tyrannical regime—when it is accompanied by a resolve, simultaneously idealistic and prudent, to help the people liberated from that regime build a better one to succeed it—can certainly be presumed morally legitimate. Zmirak's skeptical view is not uncommon among conservatives, but it is far from a majority view within the movement. The editors would have been better advised to choose a more balanced approach on this issue.

More entries of the Zmirak type would, of course, have made the book more entertaining for the casual browser; but a reference work need not be especially amusing. This *Encyclopedia* is, on the whole, fair, solid, and reliable—an important contribution to the conservative bookshelf, and a good resource for others who want to learn about conservatism in all its manifestations.

■ ***Seeing Through the Eye: Malcolm Muggeridge on Faith*** (Ignatius, 241 pp., $18.95) is an essential book: an anthology

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of the best religious writings by one of the most eloquent men of faith of the 20th century. Edited by Cecil Kuhne and with an introduction by William F. Buckley Jr., the book captures the tone of Muggeridge, in writing and in conversation.

The title comes from one of Muggeridge's favorite passages in English poetry, from Blake: "This life's dim windows of the soul / Distorts the Heavens from pole to pole, / And leads you to believe a lie / When you see with, not through, the eye." Muggeridge explains that to see *through* the eye "is to grasp the significance of what is seen, to see it in relation to the totality of God's creation." To strengthen our grasp of these realities, he urges us to read the Bible and mystical works: "These are the literature of the Kingdom . . . Who would live in a new country and not bother to study its literature?" And he offers some further, eminently practical advice: "Love laughter, which sounds loudly as heaven's gates swing open, and dies away as they shut."

■ The late Czeslaw Milosz—a Pole who lived in American exile—is best known to conservatives for *The Captive Mind*, his outstanding 1953 book of anti-Communist political philosophy. But Milosz was, in his primary vocation, a poet, and his 1980 Nobel Prize for literature was well deserved, as the new volume of ***Selected Poems: 1931–2004*** (Ecco, 267 pp., $24.95) demonstrates. It would be inaccurate to call Milosz a political poet, but his works do not flinch from describing the political realities of his century. He fought for reality against theory, and for a human meaning beyond intellect. In one of his poems, he writes of a Miss Jadwiga, a hunchbacked librarian who lost her life buried under the rubble of an apartment building:

> No one will ever know about her last
> hours,
> Time carries her in layers of the Pliocene.
> The true enemy of man is generalization.
> The true enemy of man, so-called History,
> Attracts and terrifies with its plural
> number.
> Don't believe it. . . .
> The little skeleton of Miss Jadwiga, the
> spot
> Where her heart was pulsating. This only
> I set against necessity, law, theory.

Milosz recognizes the evanescence of this world—but he reflects it in a spirit not of despair but of kindness. From another poem, entitled "This World": "It appears that it was all a misunderstanding. / What was only a trial run was taken seriously." A change, he writes, is going to come. "Old men will chase a ball, a glance in the mirror— / They are children again. / The dead will wake up, not comprehending. / Till everything that happened has unhappened. / What a relief! Breathe freely, you who suffered much." The mystery of evil—of which the 20th century gave us too many illustrations—does not have the final word. Evil has happened, it is a reality; it cannot be simply wished away; but there remains a deeply rooted human hope toward its "unhappening." Ezra Pound counseled poets—the word itself comes from the Greek *poietes*, "maker"—to "make it new"; Milosz here reflects that principle all the way back to the original Maker, whose work all poets in their own manner carry forward.

■ When he was a fourth-grader back in the 1960s, Eric Shawn was proud of the $39 he collected for UNICEF as a Halloween trick-or-treater. Flash forward four decades: The same Eric Shawn is now a hard-hitting journalist reporting the truth about the misdeeds that have become sadly characteristic of the United Nations. Nor, upon reflection, should this career arc appear all that surprising: The noble, altruistic spirit that led to the formation of the U.N. now lives most vigorously in the organization's critics, who seek to hold it to high standards. Shawn's new book, ***The U.N. Exposed: How the United Nations Sabotages America's Security and Fails the World*** (Sentinel, 336 pp., $23.95), tells a sad story about how far the U.N.'s reality has fallen short of its creators' intentions.

■ We all know—or should—that there were powerful, successful women even before the triumph of Sixties-style feminism. In ***Voices of the Silent Generation: Strong Women Tell Their Stories*** (Avisson, 389 pp., $29.95), Barbara Baillet Moran has assembled an impressive array of oral histories of women who reached adulthood in the 1950s, and lived their lives with toughness, resilience, and a "strong moral sense." **NR**

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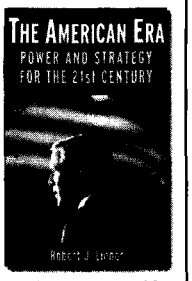

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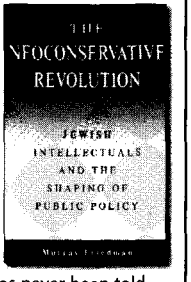

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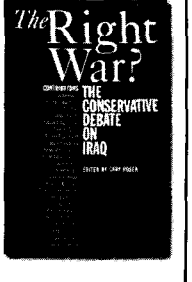

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■ MUSIC ■

DDS at 100

JAY NORDLINGER

THE music world loves an anniversary, and the big one this year, of course, is Mozart's: the 250th anniversary of his birth. But there is another one going on as well: the 100th of Shostakovich's birth. You may not think that composers of this stature would have to be specially celebrated. But there it is.

Shostakovich fever has arrived in New York. The wizardly Russian conductor Valery Gergiev is doing all 15 symphonies, with two different orchestras. And the Emerson String Quartet—maybe the most acclaimed chamber ensemble in the world—is doing the complete string quartets. There are 15 of those, too.

I have frequently noted two phenomena in music: anniversaryitis (as I have dubbed it) and the completeness craze. (Why play one—or two or six—of something, when you can play all of something?) When these two phenomena join up: Look out.

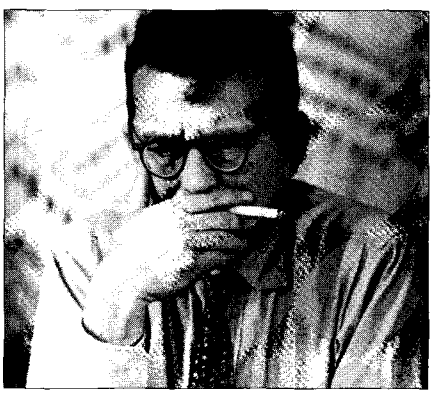
Shostakovich died in 1975, at the age of 68. Some people consider him the last great composer—that is, the most recent great composer we have had. He was an unquestioned genius, a towering genius, one in a handful. He was ferociously smart, and endlessly inspired. Almost no musical endeavor was off limits to him. He thought he might have a career as a pianist, and he was a capable pianist, but his compositional talents could not be suppressed.

No specialist he, he wrote virtually every kind of music. He wrote those 15 symphonies, of course, and those 15 string quartets. He also wrote piano pieces, ballets, film scores. He wrote several operas, and even some operetta. He wrote some of our greatest concertos—for piano, violin, and cello—and much chamber music (besides those string quartets). He wrote songs, choruses, incidental music. He left just about nothing untried.

And he loved all of music—"from Bach to Offenbach," he would quip. He was particularly close to Bach, and also to Mahler. You hear these two composers throughout his oeuvre. But then, he was very close to Beethoven, too. We can say that Shostakovich inhabited all of music, and all of music inhabited him.

It is staggering how many types of music he wrote. I'm not now referring to genres, as above; I'm referring to qualities of music. He wrote some of the profoundest, and saddest, and most transcendental music we have. He also delighted in circus music. Fulfilling a bet, he wrote an orchestral arrangement of "Tea for Two" (in under an hour). He called it—go figure—*Tahiti Trot*.

And then there's the story of the man. Shostakovich lived a fascinating life, far more fascinating than he would have wished. His life, in a way, was the life of the Soviet Union. He was born about ten years before the Bolsheviks seized power, and died about 15 years before they collapsed. The essential nature of Shostakovich is hotly debated, and probably always will be: Was he a dissident or a collaborator? Was he a man of conscience or a man of capitulation? Was he a hero or a hack? You can say that he was all these things, at various times.



Shostakovich, circa 1965

BETTMANN/CORBIS

Shostakovich had some shameful moments, and he was duly ashamed of them—deeply ashamed. For example, he allowed himself to denounce Stravinsky as "decadent" (though Shostakovich in fact greatly admired his music). But then, he would stick his neck out. Shostakovich wrote many official pieces—hymns to Lenin and the like. But he also wrote what you could describe as protest music.

I, for one, cut Shostakovich miles of slack, and I imagine you do, too. Often, he was writing for his life—composing for his very physical survival. One false step, and that would have been it. In 1936, Shostakovich's opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* attracted Stalin's disfavor. The composer was suddenly a nonperson, virtually dead. He managed to compose his way back into favor. He won several Stalin Prizes. But he always wrote scared, waiting for the knock at the door. Few of us will ever have to work under such circumstances; our own afflictions are light.

I thought I would take brief note of some recent Shostakovich CDs. From the Naxos label, we have an overview, called *Dmitry Shostakovich: A Portrait*. The two CDs here give you a variety of music, constituting a sampler. The fat booklet provides an excellent essay on Shostakovich's life and work by Richard Whitehouse.

Of chief interest, to me, is Shostakovich's own playing. Naxos has him in some of his preludes and fugues, in which his love of Bach, as you might guess, is manifest. The composer plays simply and straightforwardly—also a little stiffly. Of his understanding, there is no doubt. His playing of a D-minor fugue is full of sadness, and nobility, and the determination to persevere, no matter what. All that, from one modest cut? Yes.

Also of interest is the sound of Shostakovich's own voice. Naxos includes a radio snippet, from September 1941, in which Shostakovich exhorts his besieged countrymen to stick it out. The words have a propagandistic quality—"Soviet musicians, my dear numberless comrades-in-arms, my friends! Remember, our art is in peril"—but all can be excused, given the circumstances. I might also say that Shostakovich reads those words in dignified, almost sweet tones.

Maybe the best of the recent CDs comes from EMI Classics, giving us Han-Na Chang, the Korean-American cellist. With the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Antonio Pappano, she plays Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 1. Not long ago, Chang was just about the most impressive child prodigy any of us had heard; now she is an impressive young adult. Among her most ardent admirers is Mstislav Rostropovich, a not insignificant fact.

Shostakovich wrote his Cello Concerto No. 1 for Rostropovich, as he did his Cello Concerto No. 2. I dare say that Chang is not unlike her great Russian predecessor (and teacher, incidentally): formidable in technique, formidable in musicality. With Pappano, she plays the concerto with the right mixture of rawness and beauty, grit and refinement. She is neither too wild—

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in this often unhinged music—nor too restrained. And it does no harm that Pappano is one of the ablest Shostakovich conductors of today.

Move, now, to another Chang, and another Shostakovich concerto: Also on EMI Classics, the young Korean-American violinist Sarah Chang plays the Violin Concerto No. 1, with the Berlin Philharmonic, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. Shostakovich wrote this work in 1948, when he was out of favor, under a sort of death sentence. He "put it in the drawer," as he had to do many pieces. The concerto was not premiered until 1955, two years after Stalin's death.

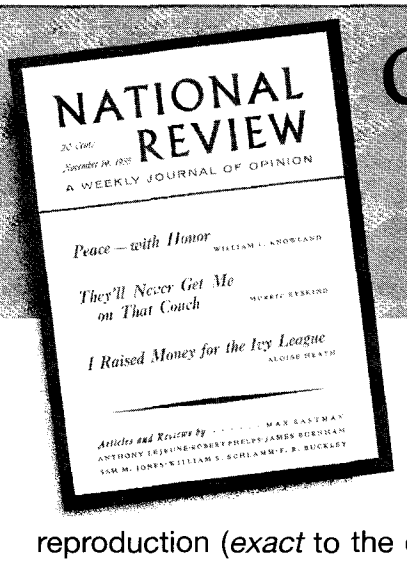
You can play this work cool, or you can play it hot—good violinists have done both. It certainly ought to have anxiety, even terror, as we wait for that knock on the door. Sarah Chang's performance is in spots too relaxed, but it is still a creditable performance. The Berlin Philharmonic exhibits its customary richness—perhaps too much of it for this bone-chilling piece.

One more recording from EMI Classics: The Bavarian Radio Symphony and Chorus, under Mariss Jansons, with Sergei Aleksashkin, bass, give us the Symphony No. 13, "Babi Yar." Shostakovich wrote this work in 1962, using texts by Yevgeny Yevtushenko. Babi Yar is the place outside Kiev where many thousands of Jews were murdered, by the Nazis. For their own reasons, the Soviet authorities did not want this symphony to be born. Considerable pressure was applied. The conductor who usually premiered Shostakovich's works, Yevgeny Mravinsky, dropped out; so did the originally scheduled bass. But "Babi Yar" had its premiere.

And who is Mariss Jansons? He was born in Riga, in the middle of the war. In fact, his mother, who was Jewish, gave birth to him in hiding. His father, Arvid, would become an assistant conductor to Mravinsky, in Leningrad. Mariss himself would later assist Mravinsky (who, whatever the extent of his courage, was a great conductor). On this recording, Jansons is assured and authoritative. And Aleksashkin sings resplendently. He also sings as though he had something important to say, which, of course, he does.

Shostakovich's last work was a viola sonata, finished a few days before he died. In the manner of Mahler, it is almost painfully introspective and valedictory. The final movement, Adagio, is meant to memorialize Beethoven. It quotes his Piano Sonata in C-sharp minor, known popularly as the "Moonlight." From WarnerClassics, we have a recording by Julian Rachlin, a Lithuanian-Austrian musician whose main instrument is the violin, but who doubles as a violist. He and Itamar Golan, a Lithuanian-Israeli pianist, play with sensitivity and taste.

We have barely dipped a toe into the great ocean that is Shostakovich, but that ocean takes something like a lifetime to explore. As for "DDS"—Dmitri Dmitrievich Shostakovich—his life is immortal. At least that of his music is. It's slightly funny to reflect that, throughout time, his anniversaries will be linked to Mozart's: When Wolfi has his 300th birthday, DDS will have his 150th. And so on. Shostakovich could have been dealt a worse pairing. The same is true of Mozart. **NR**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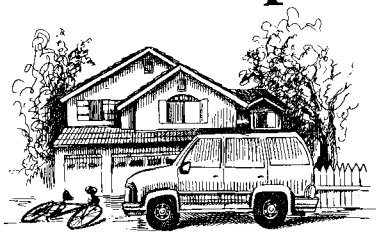
■ THE STRAGGLER ■

The Future Comes Apace



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

WATCHING those demonstrations for "immigrant rights," it occurred to me that we are the fools of the world. Americans labored and fought to create the freest, richest, most generous society that ever existed. Having done so, we threw open the doors and said to the rest of humanity: "Come on in and join the party!" In they duly came. We supposed that they'd be grateful for our generosity. Some of them were; many others laughed at our foolishness. We supposed that, seeing what a splendid thing Americans had made, they would want to absorb themselves in that thing, to become part of it. Some did; many others preferred the customs and language they were used to. Since they were so many, and we had adopted an ethos of "equal respect for all cultures" and "celebrating diversity," they found it easy to maintain their ways while ignoring ours.

We reacted to these negative responses in the way we have taught ourselves to react to any negative developments in our society that touch on matters of culture: by burying our heads in sentimental myths and feel-good platitudes, and by blaming ourselves for not being kind enough. *They are hard-working people! They are doing jobs we won't do! Enriching our national fabric! We are a nation of immigrants! Remember Ellis Island! All human beings everywhere wish for the same things! Family values don't stop at the Rio Grande!* Anyone who dissents from this script is turned on savagely, read out of the society of decent people, and consigned to the place of wailing and gnashing of teeth. Bigot! Nativist! *Racist!*

If logic had any place in this situation, and words were being used in their dictionary meanings, I ought to have been pleased by the marches—been out there marching, in fact. Weren't the marchers agitating for "immigrant rights"? Yes, they were, according to our major media outlets. And am I not myself an immigrant? Yes, I am. So what's the matter with me? Don't I want to have any rights? But of course, the marches were not about "immigrant rights" at all. I have lived in this nation as a citizen, as a resident alien, and even as an illegal immigrant, and, call me obtuse, but in all these years it never occurred to me that I was being denied any rights at all.

What were the demonstrations really about? Here in New York, where the demonstrators included many South and East Asians, as well as Latin Americans and blacks from Africa and the Caribbean, and a scattering of Irish, it was an appeal for illegal immigrants to be given residency—the fabulous Green Card (it is actually pink), leading to citizenship. That was also the major element elsewhere; but in the South and West the marchers seemed—I am judging from the TV coverage—to be much more solidly Latin American, and there was a much stronger feeling of racial solidarity about the marches. As well there might have been, seeing that a principal backer of the events was the Hispanic group called La Raza, which means "the race." Many Americans watching must have had the thought I had: that this nation already has a race problem, the one it was born with, and that we must ever strive to do our best to solve; but that we would be fools to import a second one. Such fools we apparently are.

The striking characteristics of Americans, to the rest of the world, are our niceness and our desire that our country be admired as much as we ourselves admire it. Bertrand Russell, traveling in America for the first time in 1896, noted with amusement how Americans would ask: "How do you like our country?" To his Old World ears, Russell said, it was as if someone were to ask: "How do you like my wife?" No English (or French, or Chinese) person cares whether or not foreigners like England (or France, or China); but there is something in the national character of the U.S.A. hungry for approval, for acceptance, for admiration, for love. Immigration plays right into this. What greater compliment can you pay to a nation than to uproot yourself in order to go live there? Some Americans, watching those demonstrations, saw a hundred thousand insults to our sovereignty and laws. Some other Americans saw a hundred thousand compliments. "You like me, you really like me!"

Shakespeare wrote a play called *Timon of Athens*, about a wealthy man who was exceedingly generous with his wealth. This generosity naturally attracted a lot of worthless hangers-on. Timon basked in their flattery. At last his generosity bankrupted him, and he fell into debt. The first news of the disaster is brought to Timon by his steward. Timon has some trouble grasping the fact.

> *Timon.* Let all my land be sold.
> *Flavius.* 'Tis all engaged, some forfeited and gone;
> And what remains will hardly stop the mouth
> Of present dues. The future comes apace;
> What shall defend the interim? and at length
> How goes our reck'ning?
> *Timon.* To Lacedaemon did my land extend.
> *Flavius.* O my good lord, the world is but a word;
> Were it all yours to give it in a breath,
> How quickly were it gone!

Timon gets the point. Still, he is confident he can save the situation by borrowing from all those friends he made with his lavish gifts, arguing that they must surely remember his high-minded generosity: "Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given."

Of course, when they learn of his situation, his "friends" all shun him. Nobody will lend him a dime. His nobility of spirit counts for nothing. Timon turns misanthrope, and goes off to live in a cave in the woods, raging against humanity.

Unwisely, not ignobly, have we given. Perhaps, if we can spare a little time from congratulating ourselves on our nobility, and basking in the flattery of streets full of foreigners waving our country's flag, we might try to acquire some wisdom. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

The Killings Tell a Story

NEW YORK, APRIL 4

THE fatality figures in Iraq are perhaps telling a story, which would be that the war focuses progressively on internecine killings. The American death rate for March was 31 fatalities, a gruesome toll, yet the second lowest since the invasion was launched three years ago. Over approximately the same period, nearly 1,500 Iraqi civilians were killed, a significant increase over recent months.

There are contributing explanations. Most obvious, it is easier to kill an Iraqi than an American. To kill an American soldier, it is generally necessary to ambush him in his vehicle, whence the wide use of the roadside bomb. But since the number of these attacks is declining, does this tell us that American soldiers travel about less frequently than they did, say, a year ago, when casualties mostly ranged between 50 and 100 per month? Or does it tell us that insulations against roadside bombs are more sophisticated? Or a bit of each?

One asks then: Is the furious resolve of the insurgents altering in focus? Has the enemy reckoned that the problem in hand is not Americans, who will be gone, roughly speaking, tomorrow, but Iraqis whose ethnic identities will remain the same when the grandchildren of both parties will be eyeing each other? If this is the case, can we assume that the Iraqi rebels are biding their time, in respect of their opposition to the Americans? From a sense that the Americans are transitory and, in fact, are not doing all that much harm?

The insurgents can reasonably assume that there is nothing they can do to drive the Americans away. Three years have gone by, more than 2,300 Americans have been killed, the rate of these killings reduces but is not concomitant with any reduction in U.S. strength. It is brought on by a) the reduction in U.S. exposure, and b) insurgent concentration on non-U.S. targets.

But ask then: Is this reduced exposure a part of the U.S. battle plan? We have not in recent months seen any hard U.S. assaults on hard Iraqi targets, in the class of Fallujah in 2004. Can we assume that such hard enemy nests aren't there, holding out? Or rather that the U.S. army command is less bent on smoking them out?

If there are (one speculates) 15 areas of Iraq in which the insurgents are embedded, the commanding general can elect to dispatch bombs and artillery, always with care for collateral damage done to innocent civilians. But that approach means a diminished exposure of American soldiers to high-cost engagements.

To reason that this is happening is deductive: fewer casualties, fewer engagements. However, fewer engagements should presume an enemy diminished in size and potency. But to say that runs us into the corresponding figure of 1,500 Iraqi civilian deaths. Somebody is killing those people, and the whole idea of the U.S. enterprise was to shield the Iraqis not only from the depredations of Saddam, but also from successor killers. Manifestly this has not happened.

I have myself concluded that our Iraqi mission has failed. Missions have to be judged successes or failures with some reference to a time scale. If that scale is stretched forever, it is not authentically tested. If the mission is to liberate the Prisoner of Zenda and 10 years later he is still in jail, the mission can reasonably be classified as having failed, never mind that in the 15th year he is rescued. Given our mission's failure in Iraq, the job in hand becomes to retreat with care, certainly with more care than we exercised in our retreat from Vietnam.

One would expect the military to pay greater attention than if hellbent on the mission's accomplishment to such factors as risk to U.S. personnel. The lightening of casualty figures can be seen as the military voting with their feet to begin withdrawal from an enterprise that has proved costly beyond the successes achieved.

Iran in Our Future

NEW YORK, APRIL 7

HALF the concerned world is wondering what to do about Iran. The other half will benefit from it all, or go down in the big sinking ship.

A highly readable symposium on the subject has just been published by the *Claremont Review of Books* in its current (Spring) issue. A quick historical rundown reminds us that in October 2003 Iran confessed to the International Atomic Energy Agency that it had been doing clandestine nuclear experiments, which it promised to suspend. Eight months later Tehran was once again detected in violation. Another three months later, it was again detected delinquent on its promises, and there was dithering for another six months, bringing on, in June 2005, the presidency of the awful Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (think Anodyne Jack), the mullocratic chiliast who looks forward cheerfully to the end of the world of the infidels. Four months after his election, he said that "Israel must be wiped off the map," a slogan that has been seen adorning missiles imported from Russia, which has also been the source of Iran's uranium. Four months later (February 2006), the IAEA turned the whole matter over to the U.N., and Vice President Cheney gave a speech in which he said, "We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon."

The Claremont essayists appear to agree that nuclear preemption should be "strictly a last resort." In a successful effort to avoid the vulnerability of Saddam Hussein in 1981, Iran began dispersing its nuclear tadpoles, which reside now in as many as 24 sites and are correspondingly difficult to locate and destroy.

Mark Helprin contemplates a road ahead: ". . . with an intermediate range strategic nuclear capacity [Iran] could deter American intervention, reign over the Gulf, further separate Europe from American Middle East policy, correct a nuclear imbalance with Pakistan, lead and perhaps unify the Islamic world, and thus create the chance to end Western dominance of the Middle East, and, with a single shot, destroy Israel."

Victor Davis Hanson summarizes U.S.

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diplomatic initiatives in the past. "Former president Bill Clinton last year apologized to the Iranian mullocracy for American support for the Shah 30 years ago and CIA espionage a half century past, but not to the American people for allowing Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea to begin in earnest their nuclear acquisition programs on his watch. Jimmy Carter should turn up soon, calling for sensitive understanding of Iran's unique security needs; indeed, the closer Iran gets to the bomb the more the Left will say that we can live with it."

Are there not economic sanctions as coercive as war? "Yes," writes the scholar Angelo Codevilla. "Yes indeed! Total economic sanctions can be deadlier than atom bombs. Were Europe and America to impose a total trade embargo on Iran—and enforce it by including any third party that trades with Iran—the Iranians would quickly be forced to choose between nukes and starvation. But this embargo would be war, not just against Iran but potentially against Russia."

Codevilla arrives nicely at the strategic point. "Making sure that means and ends match one another, meaning that the actions we take actually produce the ends we profess, has ever been the essence of prudence. Machiavelli taught that enemies are to be caressed or extinguished."

The final consequences of an Iranian nuclear arsenal could profoundly affect America. As much is so of the North Korean bomb. The distance between Pyongyang and California is huge. Comparable to the distance between Tehran and New York. But just as China, Russia, and Japan are the geographic girdle of North Korea, so also Russia, the Middle East, and Europe are next door to Iran. They are not the superpower, but they should devise strategy for their parts of the globe. The U.S. can do nothing more than to promise cooperation, and stand by with, of course, the ultimate weapon, directed not at nuclear sites but at civilian centers.

Illegal Conundrums

NEW YORK, APRIL 11

DEMOCRATIC protocols get pretty elusive these days. In an attempt to sort it all out, we hovered for a moment on a wild idea. Why not send the illegals to France?

But delirious ideas have short lives, as they should have, and one seeks to learn from experience. We begin today by saying that, in France, the mobs don't exactly rule, but they seem to have a veto power. The utter capitulation of President Chirac disgraces him, his party, French democratic processes, and economic common sense. And, incidentally, it reminds us of the authority of the mob in French history, beginning with the inglorious revolution which even politicians of singularly independent dispositions—like Charles de Gaulle—feel the need to propitiate by public obeisances ("Vive la Révolution!") on ceremonial occasions. The mobs all but chased de Gaulle out of town in 1968, and they have shown us, in the past weeks, their continuing power to triumph over thoughtful republican procedures aimed at reforming retrograde French practices.

Over here, the mobs have not quite yet assumed power, though it is possible that they have paved the way to supremacy on the issue being currently debated, namely how to cope with the illegals.

It pays to give a little thought to the magnitude of the problem. Some demographers believe that the real figure for the illegal population is not 11 million, but 16 million. It is possible that the figure is somewhere in between, which raises the question: How're you going to get an accurate count, exactly? One recalls, in the final chapters of apartheid, thought given to how to figure out whether a South African human being was white or black or colored. The problem did not come to a bloody boil, because it was finally, wearily, decided that the best way to handle that vexed question was to declare that everybody who lived in South Africa was a South African.

By such reasoning, everybody who lives in America is an American. But of course that is to deal lightly with the authority of America, Inc., to decide who is and who is not, properly speaking, an American.

But since we are looking into practical questions, we must add the most urgent: First you identify the illegals—then you expel them?

But that is an enormous job. And fatefully complicated by the U.S. Constitution, which says that anyone born on U.S. soil is a citizen. How many of those 11–16 million illegals gave birth in U.S. hospitals (or for that matter, in U.S. parking lots): Is it proposed that we undertake to separate these mothers from their children?

We do not have the exact count involving Operation Keelhaul, but it is estimated as being in the vicinity of 2 million. That was the number of Russians whom we agreed, however reluctantly, to repatriate to their motherland in 1945, so that Josef Stalin could keep his gulags fully occupied.

But we—Americans and British—did it. It was, however, much easier than deporting the current illegals would be inasmuch as these wretched Russians seeking refuge were heavily concentrated in military and paramilitary centers, so we could stick them into trains heading east, and figure out some way to reconcile our consciences to what we had done.

But just to round up 11 million–plus illegals presents a logistical problem of the first magnitude. Who would undertake that job? How many sleuths would be required in order absolutely to establish that this person's papers are fraudulent, that other one's valid? The undertaking would be dismaying and, conceivably, an asymptotic killer.

We can't predict what kind of a bill the Senate will come in with, after staring on television at the crowds who pledge themselves to life in America. But the practical challenge of mass deportations has got to play a role in our deliberations. One practical reform which we do have the power to enact is to repeal the provision in the 14th Amendment which confers citizenship on anyone born on U.S. soil. And then, laws are everywhere required to take sterner measures against voting by noncitizens. If we are going to be ruled by the mob, the mob should not show up with phony credentials.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

"Ethnic strife? With only four of them?"

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happy warrior

MARK STEYN

With a Majority Like This . . .

LAST year Newt Gingrich was up in New Hampshire and my neighbor Scott went along and expressed various dissatisfactions with the GOP Congress. And Newt said, well, you must remember Republicans are still pretty new at this, we're not used to being in the majority.

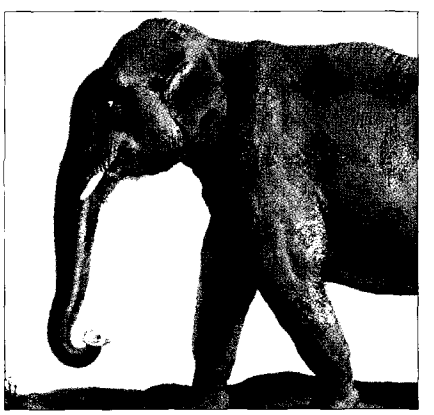
That's it? The Iraqis are expected to pick up the ins and outs of this governing business instantly, but the Republican party can't get the hang of it after eleven years? Don't worry, I'm not predicting electoral disaster this November. It would be nice to think that the GOP might get to enjoy a Geena Davis–style "hiatus" while they "retune" their winning formula. But I doubt it will happen: Even losers need someone to lose to, and the Democrats have failed to fulfill even that minimal requirement for the last decade.

Christopher Hitchens said on the Hugh Hewitt show recently that he "dislikes" the Republican party but has "contempt" for the Democrats. I appreciate the distinction, though I'm not sure I could muster even that level of genial tolerance. The Democrats have been the most contemptible opportunists in the years since 9/11: If they've got nothing useful to contribute to the great challenge of the age they could at least have the decency not to waste our time waving around three-year-old Abu Ghraib pictures and chanting "exit strategy" every ten minutes.

But what happened to the other guys? "The Republican party," says Arlen Specter, "is now principally moderate, if not liberal"—and he means it as a compliment. "I'll just say this about the so-called porkbusters," chips in Trent Lott. "I'm getting damn tired of hearing from them. They have been nothing but trouble since Katrina."

Well, to be honest, I'm a good half-decade past getting damn tired of hearing from Trent Lott. But the difference is that, as a member of the pork-funding sector of the economy, I pay for him; he doesn't pay for me. And, that being the reality of the situation, if he doesn't want to hear from the taxpayers he should get out of electoral politics, and become a bigtime lobbyist or a busboy at Denny's or whatever. Or maybe he could be an usher at the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame, which now receives federal funding. Don't ask me why. Is it a requirement of the Patriot Act? Are there Homeland Security concerns that al-Qaeda could infiltrate the Hall of Fame posing as Martha and the Vandellas?

Do you remember that anthrax business just after September 11th? At the height of the scare, Tom Daschle came out and announced that 34 of his staffers had tested positive for anthrax. I was horrified: Tom Daschle has *34* staffers? Why? Presumably to read all that poorly drafted legislation the senators themselves never have time to look at before voting on.



Too old? Too big? Too dumb?

I used to joke that the Senate was America's House of Lords—certainly, my congressman and senators (Charlie Bass, Judd Gregg, John Sununu) are all hereditary beneficiaries—but that's very unfair to Britain's poor old backwoods viscounts. In the days when I used to swing by the Palace of Westminster, I'd find a 9th duke, a 12th marquess, and a 17th earl all sharing an office the size of a men's-room stall, with one elderly secretary between them. They had no staff, no salaries—just travel and overnight expenses. The Senate is more like the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates writ large.

Can you get small government from big legislators? I doubt it. Take this foot-of-page-37 item from the Associated Press: "If barbers need a license to cut hair, there's no reason the government cannot set requirements for tax preparation, said Senate Finance Committee chairman Charles Grassley, R-Iowa."

Good grief. That's the "Republican" position? Isn't the real question this: Why do so many citizens need professional tax preparation? These days, tiny towns without a gas station or general store nevertheless manage to support an H&R Block office. Why? Because no reasonably well-informed citizen can understand—or even read—the tax code. So a minimum-wage waitress with a part-time housecleaning business requires professional assistance to file her taxes. That's a disgrace to a free society.

Senator Grassley is concerned because, if you take your taxes to ten different tax guys, they'll give you ten different answers. But so what? If you take 'em to ten different IRS guys, you'll get ten different answers. Because even the government doesn't understand the tax code. According to Americans for Fair Taxation, the IRS fails to answer correctly half the taxpayer queries it receives. Because there is no "correct answer" in any meaningful sense. Is it likely to improve matters to add a licensing bureaucracy designating which tax preparers are competent enough to discern a final tax figure not significantly at variance with six out of ten IRS agents' shots in the dark?

I don't expect Republicans to shred the tax code and reform Social Security within one term. But as the decades roll on I would like them at least to pay lip service to the notional goal of so doing. And I would admire their restraint if they could desist from adding one more disastrous shortsighted pseudo-reform to reform last year's disastrous shortsighted pseudo-reform, as they're now doing with their campaign-finance-reform reform.

And, if that's not possible, I would appreciate it if at the very very minimum Trent and Arlen & Co. could stop sounding like presidents-for-life of the one-party state of Incumbistan. **NR**

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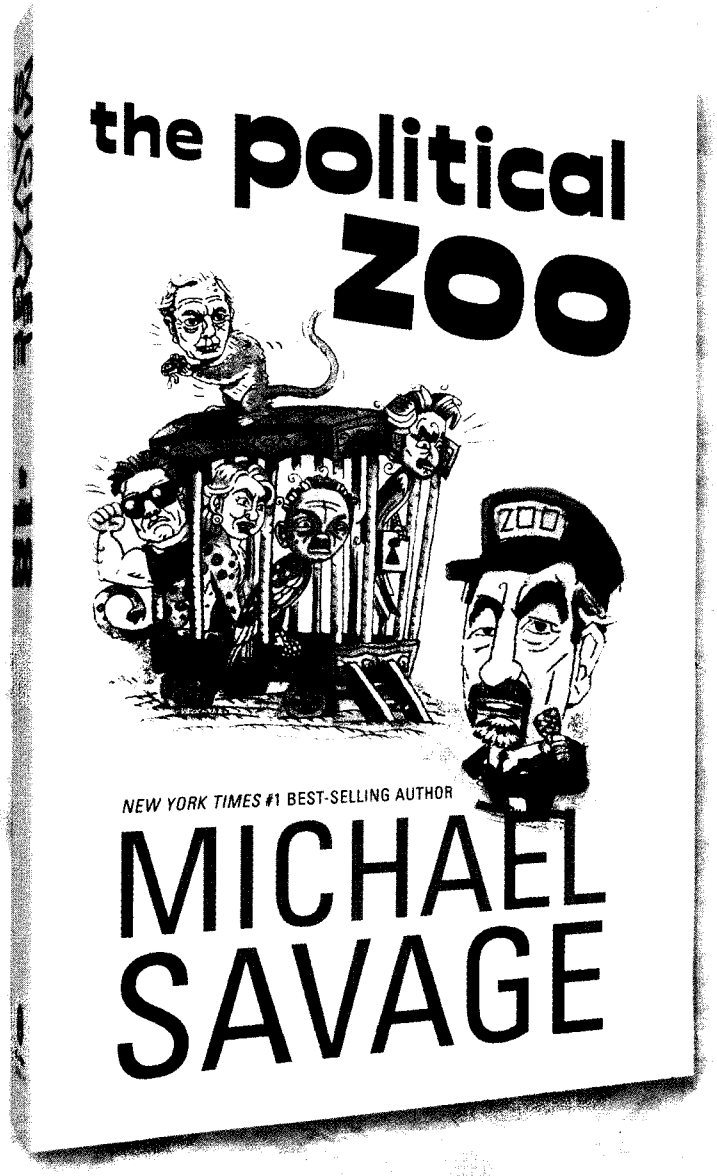

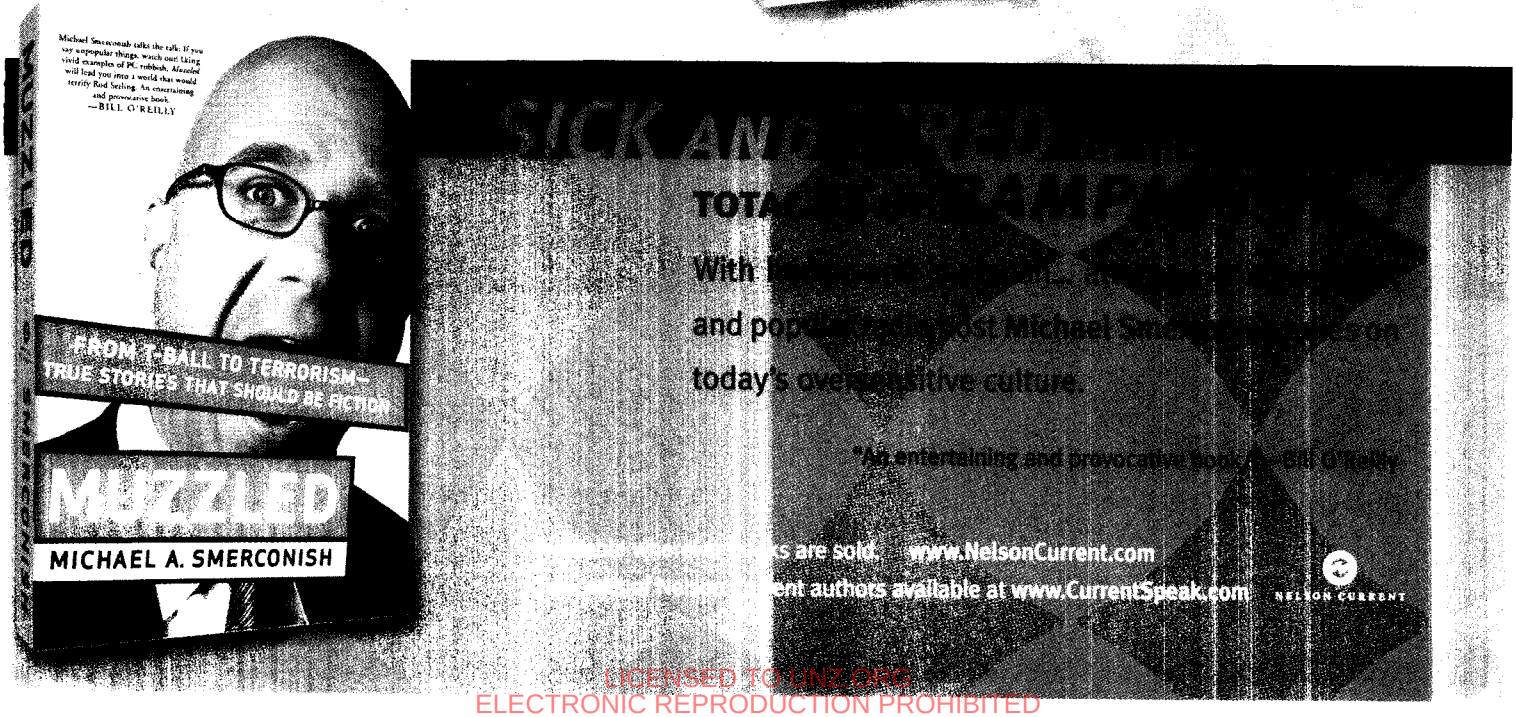

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